

THE TRAVELER'S GUIDE TO THE CAMINOS REALES IN ATASCOSA, MEDINA AND FRIO COUNTIES



Submitted to

The Texas Department of Transportation

July 10, 1996

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Castroville Chamber of Commerce

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Introduction

Real, or more appropriately, *Real*, was more than a route. It was a set of relationships between buyers and sellers, formed. Far from being one *camino real*, the *caminos reales* consisted of various seasons and years. The *caminos*, terrain, and modes influenced the choice of

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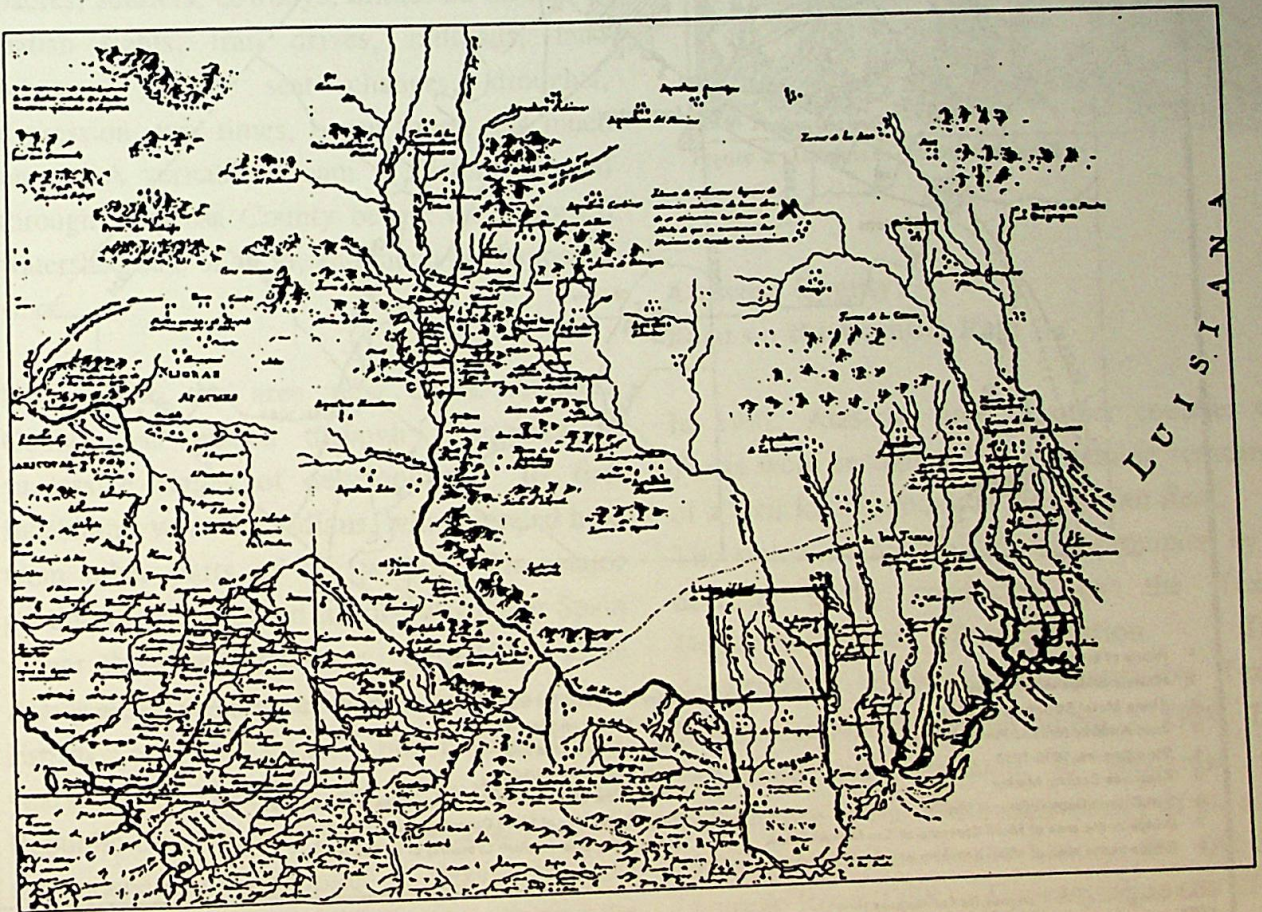
The *Camino Real* (royal road), variously known as the King's Highway, the Lower Presidio Road, and the San Antonio-Nacadoches Road, hardly seems an appropriate description for the network of Indian trails, natural stream crossings, and exploration routes that composed northern Mexico's communications system during the Spanish Colonial Period. Without an intensive investment in construction and maintenance, and there were virtually none, these early avenues of commerce, migration, and communication quickly changed to meet their users' needs.

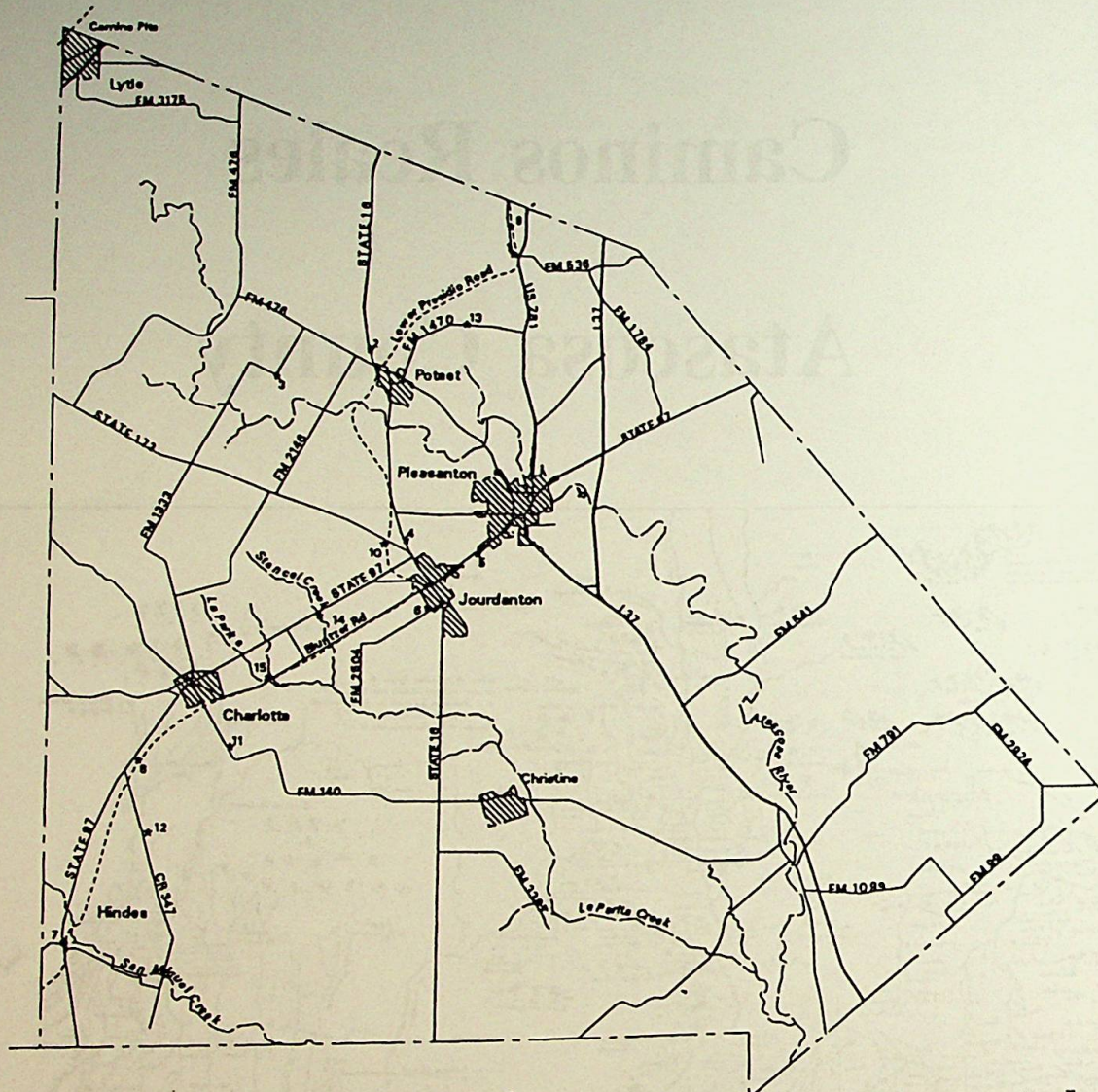
Jack to the Indian Confederacy as a date that can be beginning, the *caminos* follow its windings across Texas where Indian villages formerly lay. The earlier Spanish *entradas*, or expeditions, traveled along the more westerly, or upper, route. Apache and other Indian groups raided settlements along the early routes and were a consideration in the strategy that created the *Provincias Internas*. The gradual shift of the *Presidio del Rio Grande Road* southeastward through the 18th and 19th Centuries may have been a direct result of the Apache and Comanche threat to Spanish travelers.

Los caminos reales are recognized as one of the most significant factors contributing to the conquest and colonization of Texas. This travel guide for three counties on the *caminos reales* -- Atascosa, Medina and Frio -- provides travelers with a unique insight into the history and attractions to be enjoyed while following the modern roads that approach and approximate the historic *caminos reales* -- the Upper Presidio, Lower Presidio and Pita Roads. Written in the words of those who live there rather than a travel writer, accounts of communities are treated in a highly individual manner.

Caminos Reales

Atascosa County





* Points of Interest

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Historic Bridge over Railroad | 9 Zivley Marker on FM 536 |
| 2 Stone Motel Structure, ca. 1935 | 10 Zivley Marker on State 173 |
| 3 Jose Antonio Navarro Ranch Marker | 11 Zivley Marker on FM 140 |
| 4 Structure, ca. 1910-1918 | 12 Zivley Marker on CR 347 |
| 5 Atascosa County Marker | 13 Bridge in the area of Morfi Crossing of Las Gallinas Creek |
| 6 San Branch Baptist Church Marker | 14 Bridge in the area of Morfi Crossing of Stanoel Creek |
| 7 Bridge in the area of Morfi Crossing of San Miguel Creek | 15 Bridge in the area of Morfi Crossing of La Parita Creek |
| 8 Bridge in the area of Morfi Crossing of Lagunillas Creek | |

0 miles 6 12

- | | |
|----------|--------------------------|
| Cities | Caminos Reales (approx.) |
| Lakes | Not Publicly Accessible |
| County | |
| Streams | |
| Highways | |

Atascosa County

Source: 1994 Texas Department of Transportation
and the Texas Historical Commission

Regional Data Center



Atascosa County: An Historical Overview

Two of the early routes of the caminos reales cut across Atascosa County. Few places in the world are privileged to have a history as rich and interesting as that select spot on earth now called Atascosa County, which is situated in the big middle of South Central Texas. Created and organized in the year 1856, Atascosa County has had all the elements for an exciting history: Indians, explorers, conquistadors, Spanish padres, soldiers, cowboys, armies on the move, Indian fights, trail drives, railroads, land schemes, county seat changes, droughts, depression, war times, boom times, and much more. A veritable stream of history coursed through Atascosa County before the historical watershed date of 1856, and much has happened since.

Historically, the area now called Atascosa County has passed through a number of successive stages of development. Its first inhabitants were the Indians, who migrated here from other parts of the world. The major portion of the recorded history was under Spain - over three hundred years, 1519-1821, while Atascosa County area was a part of Nueva Espana, or New Spain. For a brief fifteen years, 1821 to 1836, it belong to the fledgling Republic of Mexico. Then it became a part of the independent Republic of Texas, 1836 to 1846. From 1846 to 1861, it was a part of the State of Texas during its early statehood period as the 28th state to join the United States of America. For a brief four years, 1861 to 1865, it cast its lot with the Confederate States of America. And in 1865, Atascosa County, as a

political unit of the State of Texas, was reunited with the United States of America. Within this framework, the history of Atascosa County may be regarded in its broader context as threads in the fabric of our state, national, and even world history. (Source: HON. Robert Thonhoff - *Atascosa County History*)

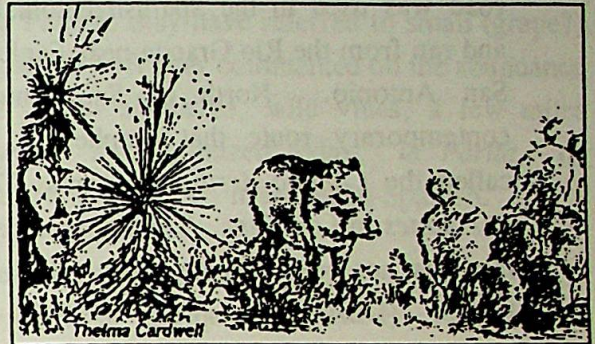


Figure 2 Javalina - Thelma Cardwell

Atascosa County: Born on the Camino Real

In 1991, Atascosa and 23 other counties of Texas were recognized as containing remnants of a trail known today as *El Camino Real*.

The statewide recognition was prompted by a detailed study conducted by the Texas Department of Transportation. The department's study was initiated by Texas Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 2, 1989. The resolution was initiated to recognize the importance of the 300th anniversary of the most significant trail in Texas history, the Old San Antonio Road (OSR). The varying routes of the old trail, which changed throughout history, formed, a corridor of transportation and commerce. This corridor directed colonization and later settlement, and established many political boundaries and policies which still exist

in Texas. Even today, the remnants of the corridor exist as large portions of modern highways.

The Texas Province of Louisiana

One of the best-known of the South Texas trails that composed the Camino Real, the Lower Presidio Road, crossed Atascosa County. The road was used in the Spanish colonial period and ran from the Rio Grande near Eagle Pass to San Antonio. North of San Antonio, a contemporary route that Stephen F. Austin called the *Camino Arriba* led across Texas to *Los Adaes* in Louisiana. The importance of this fact has not been forgotten beyond the Texas Border. (During the spring of 1990, Texas officials were invited to attend a Louisiana celebration commemorating the interstate importance of the Camino Real. Following a rare Cajun rendition of "The Yellow Rose of Texas," the mayor of Natchitoches pointed out that historically, the Louisiana town of Los Adaes was the capital of Texas for almost 50 years. A Texan replied that the anniversary of the Camino Real seemed an appropriate time for the Lone Star Republic to annex Louisiana as its eastern province. The Louisianans had the last laugh, though. On the way back to Austin, The Texans found "I Love Natchitoches, Louisiana" bumper stickers on their state cars.)

The Camino Real in Atascosa County

The Atascosa County segment of the Camino Real, the Lower Presidio Road, was closely related to a contemporary San Antonio-Laredo Road. Historians' opinions on the road have varied over the decades. Since the early 1900s, they believed that the Lower Presidio Road was the oldest Texas trail in use for almost 250

years. In 1915 and 1916, a professional surveyor, V. N. Zivley, attempted to retrace the historical route across South Texas using the diary of a Religious Brother named John Murphy who traveled the route in 1777 and 1778. Murphy, who was both Catholic and living in Spanish Texas, is better known today as Fray Juan Agustin de Morfi. Zivley's survey led the Daughters of the American Revolution to place granite markers along the old route. Much the worse for wear and informal target practice, some of these can still be seen in Atascosa County today. Occasionally, they make a convenient point for tossing empty beer cans.

The Lower Presidio Road was a later route of the Camino Real that originated about 1750 and was used until 1800. It postdated an earlier trail blazed by the first expedition that crossed Texas in 1691. This earlier route north of Atascosa County, was used by settlers to found San Antonio, Nacogdoches, and the early missions in Texas. After 1800, the Spanish military in Texas built new roads in anticipation of an American invasion from Louisiana. During its use, the Lower Presidio Road was known as the Camino de en Medio; the middle road. A county northward, the Camino Pita, the oldest of the actual trails, was considered to be the lower road leading south from San Antonio.

Overlooked by researchers, the Lower Presidio Road, while physically separate, was closely related to the Laredo Road, with many noted landmarks common along both trails in Atascosa County. Streams such as the *San Miguel*, *Lagunillas*, *Guajalote*, *Parita* and *Gallinas* were

noted along both routes. The Lower Presidio Road was also related to the lost Spanish colonial mission ranch of *El Atascoso* and probably was its eastern boundary. *El Atascoso* was a large church ranch that belonged to the San Antonio mission of San Jose. Well over 50,000 acres in extent, the ranch was never well described and has faded from the historical record.

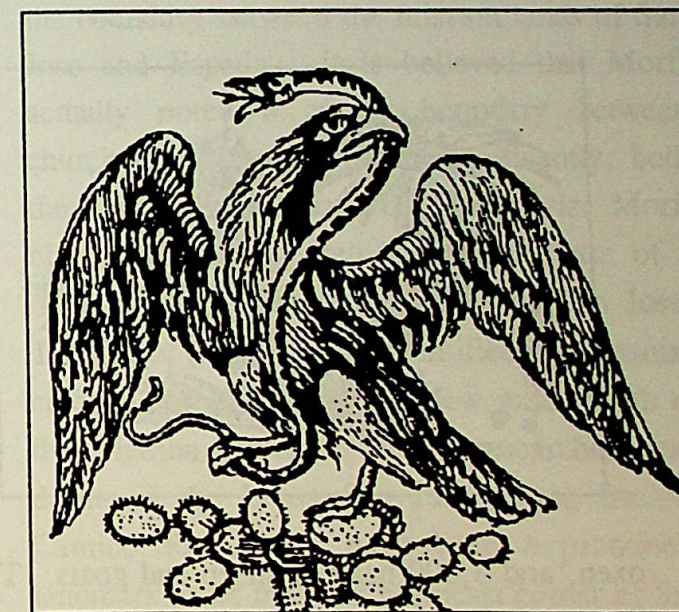
The significance of the Camino Real and its relation to the history of Atascosa County is described below as a modern review of Brother John Murphy's travel across the area in 1777.

Fray Juan Morfi (Brother John Murphy) Visits Atascosa 1777-1778

Fray Morfi traveled northward from the Rio Grande across what later became Atascosa County in December 1777 and January 1778. His party entered modern Atascosa County from the southwest after crossing Esperanza Creek in the northeast corner of modern La Salle County. Thirty minutes after leaving the Esperanza, Morfi arrived on the banks of *San Miguel* Creek, near modern State Highway 97. Morfi described the *San Miguel* as a *laguna bella agua*, with a pool of water about 40 paces long. About 9 miles further, southwest of Charlotte, his thirsty party encountered small ponds of bad water (*las laguillas de mala agua*) which he said continued for another 5 miles, possible to the west branch of *La Parita* Creek (known as the main channel on modern maps). Swept by a norther, Morfi camped near Charlotte on Dec. 19, 1777.

The next day, it snowed. After traveling about 10 miles, Morfi's party arrived at what he

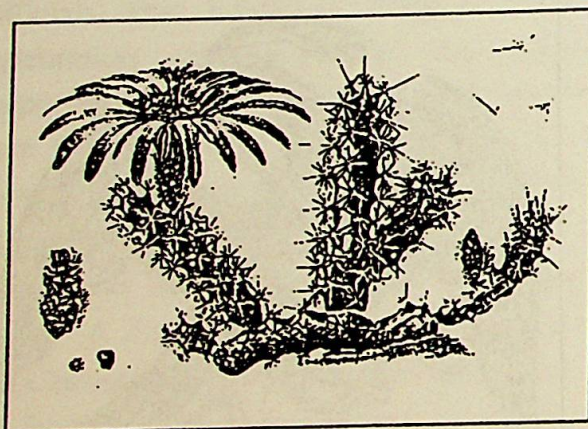
called the water holes of the *La Parrita*, thought to be modern Stancel Creek. The Stancel is a major tributary of the modern *La Parita* may be noted from several sources, including Fray Morfi's records and those of Jean Louis Berlandier in the 1830s. Berlandier was a 19th-century naturalist who wrote detailed accounts of his travels in Texas. The original spelling, *La Parrita*, may have referred to small (grape?) vines. Morfi later commented on the abundance of *parras silvestres*, wild vines, a few miles away. As anglicized today, "*la Parita*," or "*Laparita*," has no meaning in Spanish.



Traveling northeast, Morfi's party entered the forest of the Atascoso. There, after almost 8 miles beyond the Parrita, he reached a spring on the modern Atascosa River. Given that Morfi was traveling on the Lower Presidio Road, this may have been near the known crossing about 2 miles west Of State Highway 16, southwest of Poteet. Another crossing may have existed a short distance away, near modern FM 2146 and the river.

Morfi's party may have come across the "lost" mission ranch of El Atascoso, part of lands owned by the Mission San Jose y San Miguel de Aguayo in the 18th century. His journal entries refer to "settled land" and an abundance of mestenada, or wild livestock, on the camino; the soldiers of his escort caught cattle there to eat.

Almost forgotten and poorly described in the historical record, El Atascoso, was worked by mission Indians who were under constant threat of attack by the Lipan Apache. A decade before Morfi, the ranch consisted of about 50,000 acres and was reported to own 10 droves of mares, 60 burros, 1,500 yoke of



oxen, and 5,000 head of sheep and goats. The limits of the ranch have never been defined, except that the Camino Real may have been its eastern boundary southward to the Atascosa River. Between El Atascoso and the adjacent Rancho San Lucas, Mission San Jose held over 100,000 acres. The lands covered parts of three modern counties and the present-day communities of Poteet, Castroville, La Coste, Devine, Lytle, Natalia, west San Antonio, and possibly, Somerset. If Mission San Jose's reference to a camp on the San Miguel Creek is

included, the estimate of church-held acreage would be tripled.

The Archangel Saint Michael Protector of the Faithful

The San Miguel deserves some mention as the name does not appear in the historical record before the emergence of the Lower Presidio Road. The San Miguel Creek may have been the southern boundary for the total lands claimed by the Mission San Jose in San Antonio. Historians have not yet considered the ethno historical significance of Spanish colonial landmarks, particularly those named after religious figures. San Miguel, or Saint Michael, was a patron saint, defender and protector of Christians from the heathen. Thus presented, everything beyond the San Miguel Creek toward San Antonio fell under the protection of the Archangel Michael, the most militaristic defender of Christianity. Unfortunately, this did little to impress the heathen Apache, who failed to appreciate the subtle inferences of Catholicism.

The extent and location of the forgotten San Antonio Spanish mission ranches, like the Camino Real itself, have directly influenced modern political and property boundaries as well as land distributions in Atascosa County.

As Morfi headed north to the Medina River, he traveled 5 leagues, or 13 miles, from the Atascosa to reach the *Canada Magdalena*, and shortly after, passed Gallinas Creek. Curiously, several landmarks in the area, the hill of San Jose, the ravine of Magdalena, and a nearby campsite called San Simon, were all named after

biblical characters associated with Lent and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The *Canada Magdalena*, Morfi's last landmark in modern Atascosa County, is believed to be Galvan Creek near the county line. The Gallinas (from gallinas de la tierra, meaning wild or native chickens) was first mentioned in the 18th century, before the presence of domesticated chickens in the area. Even today, the locale has many wild turkeys.

A Shifting of the Earth's Crust

Morfi's journal entry of 13 miles between the Atascosa and the Canada is much further than the average map distance from known Atascosa River crossings to Galvan Creek. A distance of more than 5 miles cannot be explained as an error of recording as Morfi gave the same distance later on his return trip southward.

Even though strange things have happened in Atascosa County, an unnoticed 5-mile shift of the earth's crust in the last two centuries is a bit much. The most obvious explanation is that a previously unrecognized segment of the Camino Real existed between the Atascosa and Galvan Creek and accounted for the extra distance.

The largest natural source of water north of the river and near the Camino Real, is the historical *Agua Negra* springs, almost halfway between the Atascosa and the Galvan. As plotted on modern topographic maps, a route passing the *Agua Negra* Creek about 4 miles north of the Atascosa River would account for both the extra distance and directions noted by Fray Morfi.

Such a segment of the old trail would have been parallel to but west of the documented Camino Real segment, the "*bereda de los Gachupines*," (the trail of the {Royalist} Spaniards) that marked the northeast corner of the old Jose Antonio Navarro land grant near Poteet.

Morfi's travel, after passing the modern county line toward the Medina River, included several references significant to both Atascosa and Bexar Counties. Just beyond Gallinas Creek, he noted landmarks that identified the edge of the lands belonging to Mission San Francisco de la Espada. This presents an discrepancy since it was noted earlier that the Camino Real formed the boundary between the mission lands of San Jose and Espada. It is believed that Morfi actually noted a corner boundary between church ranch lands. More significantly, both the Camino Real and the landmarks Morfi observed were apparently near the base of a high hill once known as the Loma San Jose. The hill of San Jose was identified in a Spanish colonial survey of 1808 as few miles south of the Medina River. Future researches may debate if the Loma San Jose, along the old Camino Real, may have been a prominent landmark as or near the northeast corner of San Jose's mission ranch of *El Atascoso*.

Fray Juan Agustin Morfi's trip along the Camino Real and across the historic landscape describes the Atascosa County of another time period. As importantly, Morfi's diary entries offer clues to the origin of place names and landmarks that can still be found today.

Atascosa County shares this history of the Camino Real with 23 other counties of Texas

that recognized the 300th anniversary of the Old San Antonio Road in 1991. The unique contributions that these areas have made to the state's history will never be measured by an obscure footnote in a local history or as a passing comment in a monthly county historical meeting. Instead, these contributions will be measured as a continuing heritage for the descendants of those who settled along an historic trail that led to the settlement of Texas. (Source: A. Joachim McGraw - Submitted to the Pleasanton Express in Pleasanton, Texas)

Early References to Vegetation

The earliest comments about this county were those of De Leon who probably traversed the southwestern corner of the county in 1689. There is a possibility that his comments actually apply to a trip across the northwestern tip of McMullen County. De Leon's party left the Frio River, perhaps present La Salle County northwest of present Fowlerton, passed near the common corner of La Salle and Atascosa Counties and may have struck the modern *San Miguel* Creek. He reported, "The country we passed through was level, with fine pasturage, with very pleasant glades, and occasionally, little mottles of oak. We came to a river, which we named Rio Hondo. Apropos of this river, its descent on each side is about forty feet; near it, on both banks, are some insignificant hills, some of them timbered." Near the river De Leon found some large white rocks "...on some of which we saw some crosses cut, and other figures artificially made with great skill..."

The party then turned down the right bank of the *Rio Hondo* and went into northern McMullen County. De Leon recounts, "we

went more than four leagues (about 10 miles) down the river without crossing it, sometimes east, sometimes southeast; we halted on the hither bank. The country is of the same sort here as at the last stopping-place; level, for the most part, though there is a little mesquite timber."

In 1690, De Leon again may have entered Atascosa County at its southwestern corner and went to the Rio Hondo, several miles downstream from present Hindes. At this point, some Indians informed him that there was a Frenchman in the vicinity so he set out to capture this person. (Source: Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife Bulletin #45)

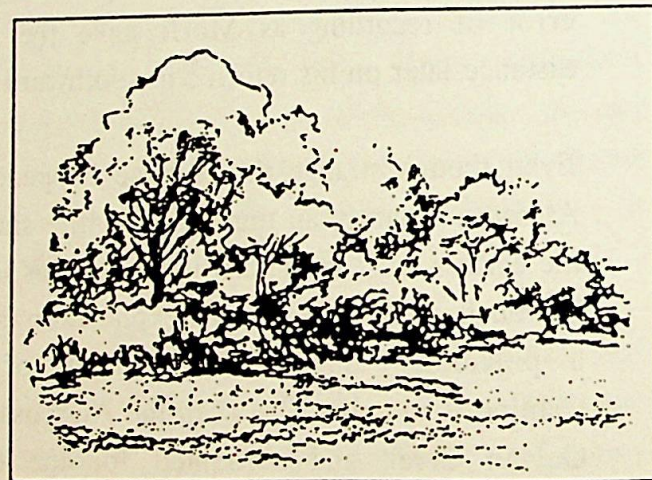


Figure 3 Oaks - Thelma Cardwell

Camino Real Communities of Atascosa County

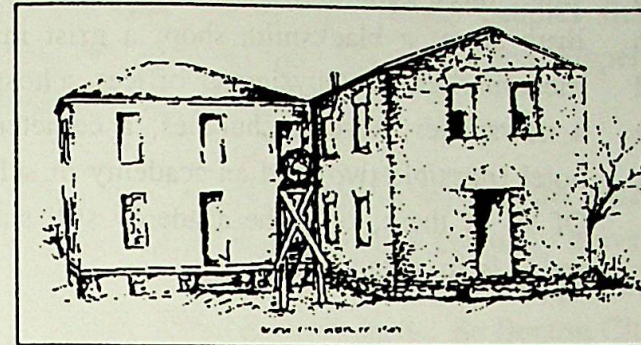


Figure 4 Benton City Institute CA 1906 - Gladys Glover

Benton City

Benton City is a ghost town a few miles southeast of Lytle, Texas. Located on the Atascosa River, it was at one time a thriving little town with a newspaper, a tuberculosis hospital, cotton gins, a saw mill, blacksmith shop, post office and an all-level school, Benton City Institute. Of all the edifices, only a few remain, primarily the Benton City Institute, now roofless and tumbling. Built in 1875, it educated not only children, but older youngsters who had not completed their education. Also in existence, with a historical marker, is the old cemetery. Some graves are unmarked, some lost and some tell a graphic story of the hard frontier life of the times in which a family would lose half its children in infancy or early childhood and in which snakebite, pneumonia or diabetes was usually fatal. Recent archaeological investigations in the area reveal that the Benton City area may have been on the route of northward-moving Spanish and Mexican Armies. And below those artifacts lie evidence of prehistoric people camping on the banks of the then free-flowing Atascosa River, hunting

and making tools and living on the wildlife and native plants of the area.

Visible from the Public Right of Way - On F M 3175 - Benton City Institute
Structure was built in 1875. Atascosa Lodge 379, A.F. & A.H., bought top floor, 1876. School was owned by educators: first, Col. John D. Morrison, later B. C. Hendrix. A faculty member was Isaac Wood of Benton City. The institute operated under a Texas law distributing state funds to supplement private tuition: had basic courses plus accounting, law music, and surveying. Later fully tax-supported, it had an influential career until 1919 and consolidation of school district with Lytle. Building was used at times until 1934. (SOURCE: "BENTON CITY - Relic Town" in Patchwork, Lytle Folks, Facts and Fables by Margaret Trouart)

More Information

"Out in the mesquite brush about three miles southeast of Lytle once was the thriving town of Benton City, a center of culture and learning before the turn of the century." so wrote philosopher poet Dr. John Ward.

"There was an old road known as the Gold Road which ran from the coast at Indianola to Eagle Pass, running through...Benton... on westward."

"...when an Indian trail turned off into the gold road to California, there was a settlement on the Atascosa River at the site where Benton City was established..." Big Foot Wallace reported encountering settlers in the area in the early 1840s.

The first recorded land transaction taking place after Spanish colonialism and the Republic of Texas had gone into history was a Letter Patent dated April 26, 1847, from the State of Texas to Jacob de Cordova, granting him one hundred and sixty acres of land in the Benton area. The land was immediately sold for \$160 and sold again for in 1874 for \$200 in gold. Joseph R. Sweeten acquired the acreage in 1875 for \$400 and immediately platted the land and began to sell lots and blocks along the Atascosa River.

The little settlement grew rapidly between 1870 and 1880 and probably acquired its name in those years - "Benton" at first, (possibly) for a popular U.S. Senator and artist, advocate of Western expansion and colleague of Sam Houston the word "City" was added later as the town grew.

Some of the businesses recorded in county tax records and the memories of some descendants included Sweeten's store and shoe shop, livery stable, hotel, and stage stop. The stage stop implies the presence of lodging, food, provisions for the horses, mail distribution, possible a vault or safe for safekeeping passengers' valuables. The post office was at the postmaster's home or place of business as was common at that time. One home that housed the post office for a time still stands facing FM 3175. The modern road follows the old road for the most part, leading through the grassy main plaza of the town, which was also a social center, the perfect spot to meet on Saturday afternoon and show off horse flesh and horsemanship.

Facing the main plaza and on the road that led along the Atascosa River were assembled, over time, three general stores, three cotton gins, a drug store, a blacksmith shop, a grist mill, a meat market, two physicians' offices, a hospital, a newspaper, several churches, a cemetery, a hotel (possible two) and an academy or school. Of all of these, only the academy still stands, and it is in a state of decay.

The Benton City Normal Institute was thought of as a college, the largest school between San Antonio and Laredo, according to some records. It supplemented or replaced the series of privately built and financed little schools that were roughly built on a citizen's property then moved as demand required. Teachers were migratory, teaching a few months in Benton then moving on - some of these migratory teachers later taught in Pleasanton .

The Benton City School accommodated all ages, from small children to adults who had interrupted their education to serve the Confederacy. Its courses included, besides the basic subjects, music, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, double-entry bookkeeping, chemistry, astronomy, surveying and civil engineering. At least one professor was known to have taught all day and farmed at night, with a lantern tied out in front of his mule. Children arrived at school afoot or on horses or mules, carrying lunch with them, sweet potatoes, lard sandwiches, hard-boiled eggs and the like.

The top floor of Benton City Schoolhouse housed the Masonic lodges for many years.

Churches were important in the community, providing sanctification, education, socialization and matrimonial services. Many couples first met at church socials, hay rides, box suppers and brush arbor revivals.

When the railroad came through in the early 1880s, businesses and citizens gradually moved either to Somerset or to Lytle, taking their churches and homes with them. So Benton City came to the same end as many other area towns; bypassed by the railroad. (Source: Margaret Trouart)

Charlotte

In 1910, the land for the city of Charlotte was owned by area residents Jourdan Campbell and Colonel T.H. Zanderson. It is said that J.F. Edwards patterned the layout of the town after a wagon wheel - with the streets representing the spokes of the wheel.

In 1911, the railroad proposed to build tracks through Charlotte. Each farmer and rancher was asked to give a portion of their land to the railroad. It is reported that George F. Hindes and M.M. Davis each gave several thousand acres.

Charlotte supposedly received its name from one of the daughters of D. Charles Simons, who aided in much of the development of Atascosa County.

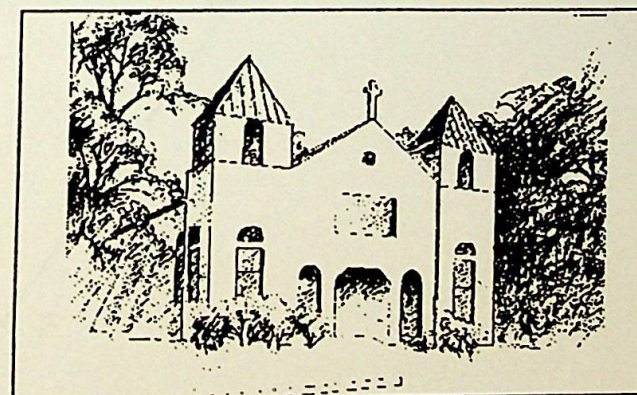


Figure 5 St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church - Janice Yow Hindes

In the early days, cotton was king. At one time, wagons waited in line for as long as twenty-four hours to get cotton ginned with four gins running around the clock. One early-day cotton farmer was M. M. Davis Sr., who, at one time, had thirty-nine tenant farmers on a thousand acres. Cotton has given way to

peanuts as the principle crop, followed by small grain crops.

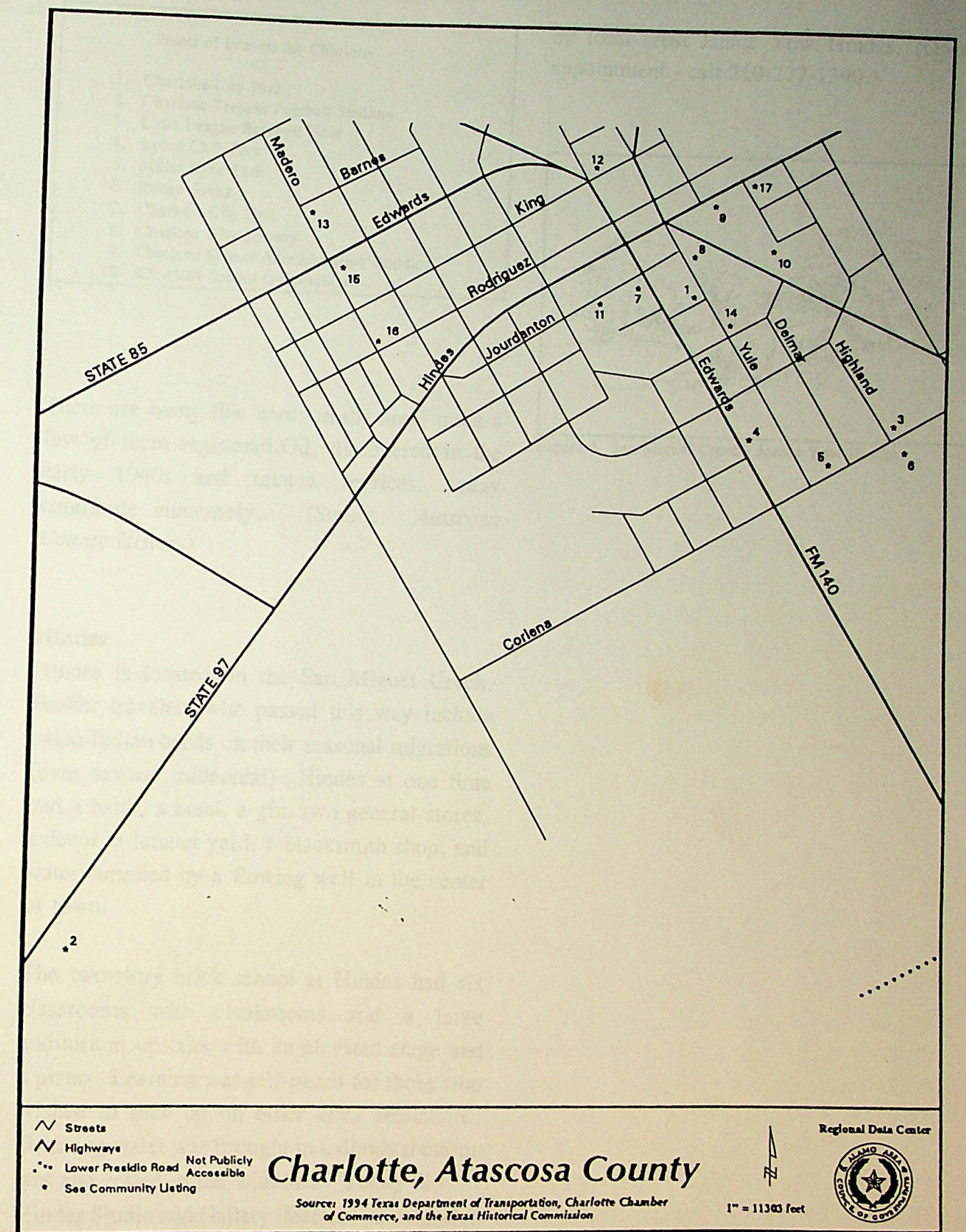
Ranching has remained a large part of the area industry. Oil production and related services began in the 1940s and also continues as a main industry in Charlotte. The town celebrates its heritage in the ranching business every year with a Fourth of July celebration. (Local information number: 210-277-1414 - City Office)

More Information

Charlotte is an agricultural and oil city as befits a town carved from ranch land - the old Toby Ranch. In 1910, the townsite acreage was owned by Jourdan Campbell and Colonel T. H. Zanderson. Prospective buyers were often driven out from San Antonio in large motor cars and taken on a tour of the townsite. The real estate office was in a large brush arbor located where the school now stands.

In 1911, Mr. J. E. Franklin came from Missouri with a proposition to construct a railroad through the county and Charlotte. Landowners were asked to give land outright to finance the railroad and to provide right of way.

Dr. Charles Simmons, who aided in the development of much of Atascosa County, had three daughters named Charlotte, Imogene, and Christine. Respective towns were supposedly named after these girls.



Points of Interest for Charlotte

1. Charlotte City Park
2. Charlotte Trojans Football Stadium
3. Little League Baseball Field
4. Lyons Club Park
5. Miller Ryne Park
6. Rodeo Arena
7. Charlotte City Hall
8. Charlotte City Library
9. Charlotte School Administration Building
10. Charlotte School Gymnasium

by local artist Janice Yow Hindes. (Open by appointment - call 210-277-1390.)

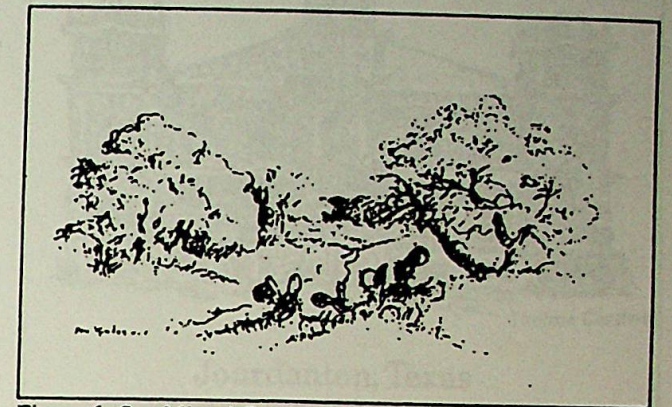


Figure 6 San Miguel Creek - Janice Yow Hindes

There are many fine herds in the area, quite a few of them registered. Oil, discovered in the early 1940s and related services, today contribute immensely... (Source: *Atascosa County History*)

Hindes

Hindes is located on the San Miguel Creek. Earlier travelers who passed this way include paleo-Indian bands on their seasonal migrations (over several millennia!) Hindes at one time had a bank, a hotel, a gin, two general stores, a depot, a lumber yard, a blacksmith shop, and water supplied by a flowing well in the center of town.

The two-story brick school at Hindes had six classrooms with cloakrooms and a large auditorium upstairs with an elevated stage and a piano. Learning was self-paced for those who wished to pick up on other class recitations. Drinking water was brought in individual mason jars and rested in the windows. Today the Hindes Studio and Gallery features an extensive display of fine western art and regional vistas

Jourdanton

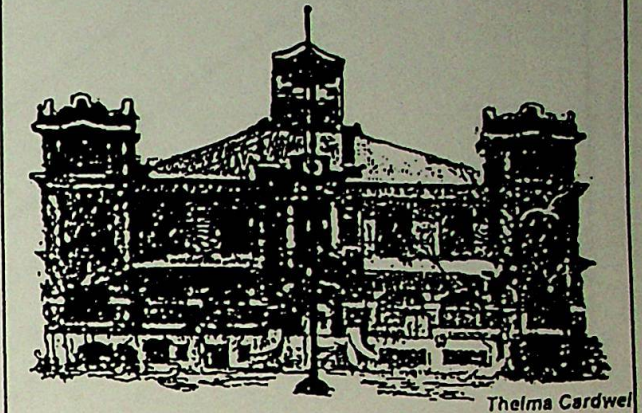
Jourdanton, founded in September 1909 by Jourdan Campbell and his partner, Colonel T. H. Zanderson, sprang up overnight. The town originated to attract the Artesian Belt Railroad to this section of the county. A \$50,000 bonus was paid to the railroad company for this privilege. Cambell and Zanderson owned the Tobey Ranch, about 40,000 acres adjoining the townsite. Promoting the area for irrigated farms, a three-day auction sale of town lots was held amidst great fanfare and celebration. Livestock and cotton, shipped by rail to San Antonio and other markets, caused the town to prosper.

By 1910, the Atascosa County State Bank was housed in a new brick building, the office of The Monitor was moved from Pleasanton to Jourdanton, a post office was established, over a hundred students were enrolled in school, and the Methodist and Baptist Churches had been holding services for almost a year.

A locally famous battle for the county seat characterizes this town, a town that has continued to grow. The railroad is gone, and the red and brown chocolate soils lyrically described by Jourdan Campbell no longer produce cotton. Now the rich natural resources of the area - oil, gas and lignite - and the daring of its entrepreneurs rule Jourdanton's future.

The Tri-City Hospital serves as a regional center with a physician-staffed 24-hour emergency room. Facilities offer physical rehab, surgery and services of specialists from San Antonio and Air-Life services.

Atascosa County Courthouse



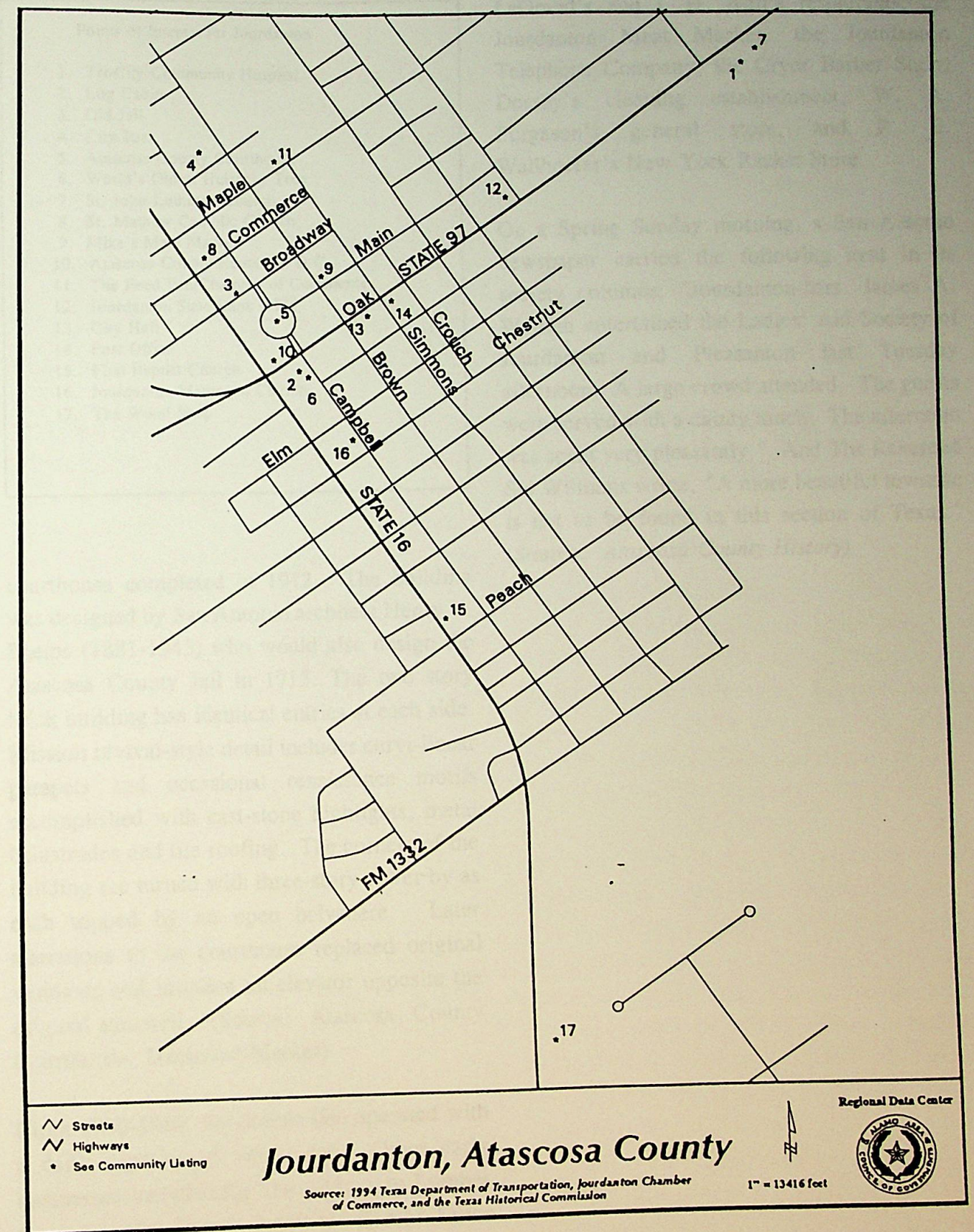
Jourdanton, Texas

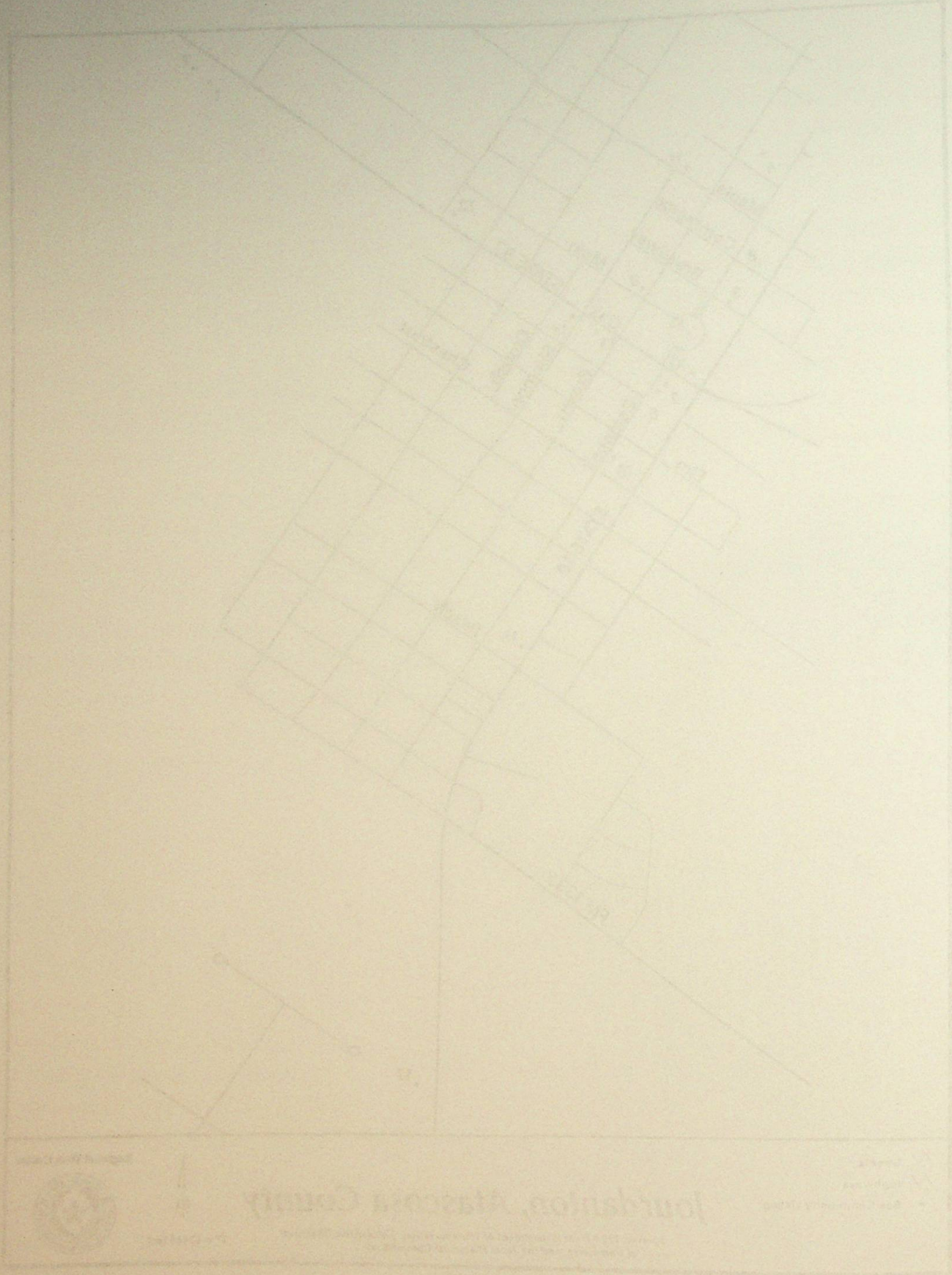
Figure 7 Atascosa County Courthouse - Thelma Cardwell

The World's Oldest Huisache tree grows 200 yards south of the Atascosa County Courthouse. There are historical markers at the courthouse and old jail structures (both built in 1912) and at a log cabin replica of the first courthouse. Jourdanton's annual Cactus Kick - is celebrated the third weekend in May. (Local information numbers: Atascosa County Courthouse 210-769-3093 ; Jourdanton Public Library 210-769-3087.)

More Information

Atascosa County was created from Bexar County in 1856. The first County seat was at Navarro and the County's first courthouse was a log cabin. The County seat was moved to Pleasanton in 1858 and a frame courthouse was erected. A second courthouse was built in 1868 followed by a third, a red rock structure in 1885. When a special election resulted in the relocation of the County seat to Jourdanton in 1910, the County officers were housed in rented quarters. The following year the Gordon-Jones Company began construction on a new





Points of Interest for Jourdanton

1. Tri-City Community Hospital
2. Log Cabin
3. Old Jail
4. City Park
5. Atascosa County Courthouse
6. World's Oldest Huisache Tree
7. St. John Lutheran Church
8. St. Mathew Catholic Church
9. Mike's Meat Market
10. Atascosa County Economic D.C.
11. The Feed Pen/Chamber of Commerce
12. Jourdanton State Bank ATM
13. City Hall
14. Post Office
15. First Baptist Church
16. Jourdanton Methodist Church
17. The Wood Shop

courthouse completed in 1912. The building was designed by San Antonio architect Henry T. Phelps (1881-1945) who would also design the Atascosa County Jail in 1915. The two story brick building has identical entries at each side. Mission revival-style detail includes curvi-linear parapets and occasional renaissance motifs accomplished with cast-stone highlights, metal balustrades and tile roofing. The corners of the building are turned with three-story tower-by as each topped by an open belvedere. Later alterations to the courthouse replaced original windows and installed an elevator opposite the original stairwell. (Source: Atascosa County Courthouse Historical Marker)

Circa 1909-1910, the Steinle Gin operated with a daily capacity of fifty bales. Other early businesses included the Texas-Mexican Lumber Company, the Central hotel, the Kempf Tailor Shop, the Jourdanton Bakery, Blunt's Tin Shop,

LeGrand's and J. H. Null's restaurants, the Jourdanton Meat Market, the Jourdanton Telephone Company, the Cryer Barber Shop, Dossey's cleaning establishment, W. A. Purgason's general store, and R. E. Wallhoefer's New York Racket Store.

On a Spring Sunday morning, a San Antonio newspaper carried the following item in its society columns: "Jourdanton-Mrs. James A. Waltom entertained the Ladies' Aid Society of Jourdanton and Pleasanton last Tuesday afternoon. A large crowd attended. The guests were served with a dainty lunch. The afternoon was spent very pleasantly." And The Reverend Sid Williams wrote, "A more beautiful townsite is not to be found in this section of Texas." (Source: *Atascosa County History*)

Lytle

Settlers lived in the Lytle area, hunting, farming and ranching, way back before Atascosa County was formed. They lived in cabins out in the brush on creek banks, with trails leading to the nearest neighbors and civilization. (The community of Benton City housed some of these early inhabitants.) The history of the area includes encounters with even earlier inhabitants -- Indians that included the Coahuiltecos, Comanche and Apache.

In 1882 the town of Lytle began with the International and Great Northern Railroad Depot set down on land donated by Fitch Adams, a bachelor-farmer. Lytle was named for William Lytle, an area rancher. The town started around Adams Street with a Post Office, general store, and a casket builder. Main Street and the business section have migrated steadily to the east, as Old Pearsall Road, Highway 81 (now designated as Highway 132), then IH35 became the hub of activity. Today's Highway 132 businesses have a brick facade facing the railroad and also a refurbished back door which became their front doors. Main Street moved over from Old Pearsall Road to Highway 81. Main Street today is dominated by the century-old Gidley home, which was built as a boarding house/hotel in 1895 by the widow of William Lytle. Left with children to rear, she had the hotel built for income.

Many of Lytle's early citizens migrated from surrounding communities, especially from Benton City. The town through time has boasted several hotels, a newspaper, and a large feed and seed enterprise still standing on Main

Street and still in use for processing corn, maize and peanuts from the rich agricultural lands around Lytle. The town's oral history includes memories of a drought in the late 1800s that sent some citizens into migrant labor until the rains came.

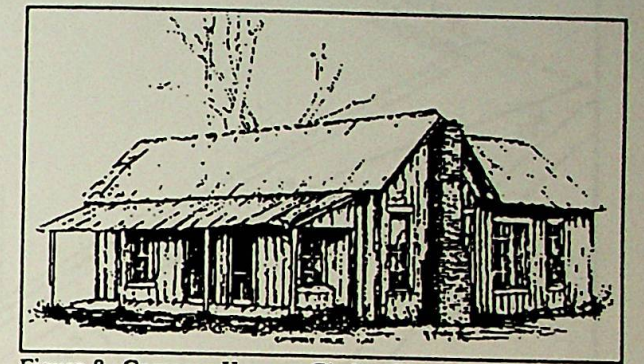
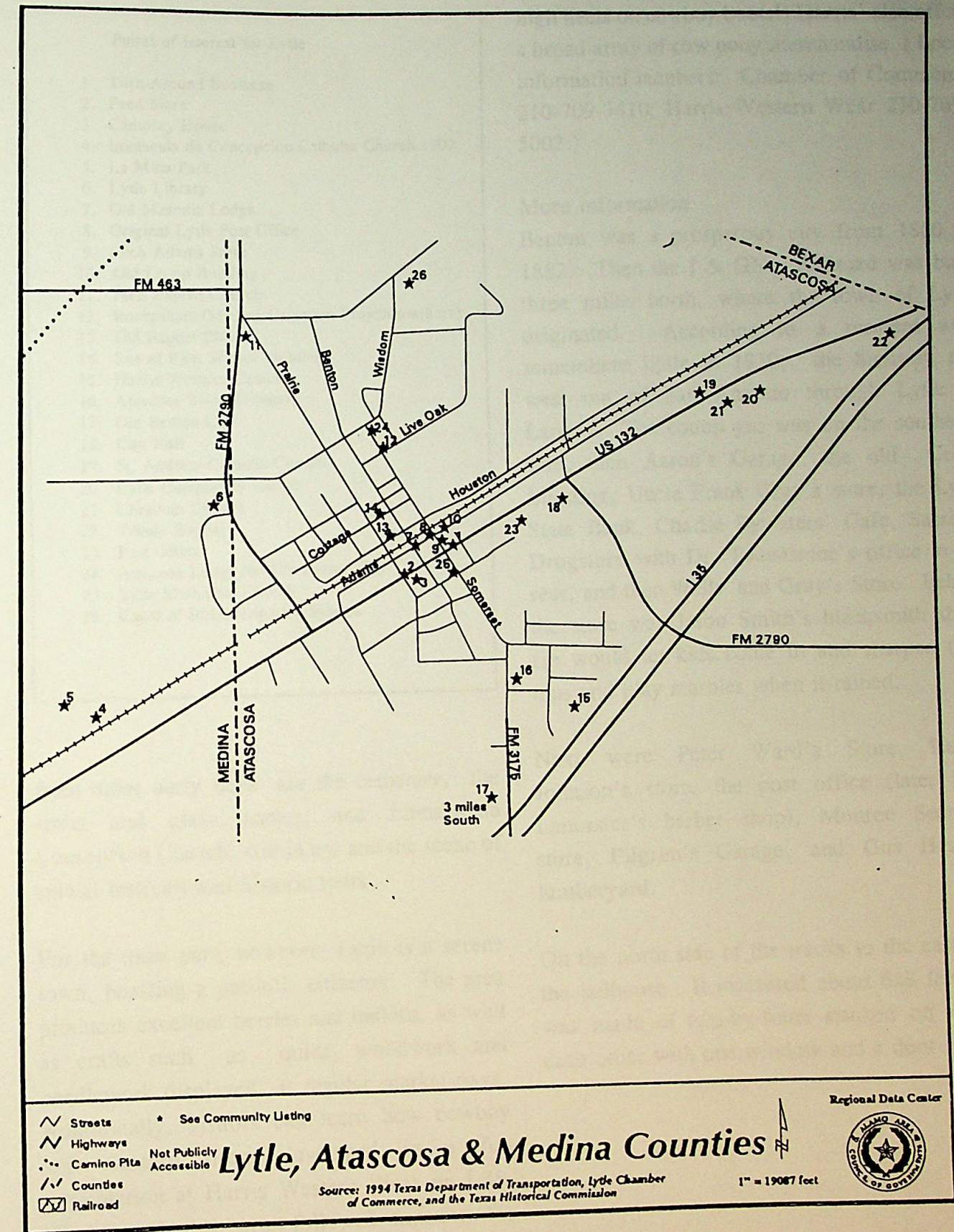


Figure 8 Campsey House - Gladys Glover

Weather has been definitive in Lytle's life, as a prodigious hailstorm in the 1890s devastated the town, ruining every roof and all windows, killing livestock and injuring citizens. Another episode in the 1920s saw flood waters rush down the Atascosa River, carrying away a two-story home and its occupants.

For many years, Lytle had stockyards in the middle of town, next to the railroad for ease in shipping. The pens no longer exist, but a large traffic of cattle trucks attests to Lytle's cattle industry. Oil has played a part in the area's economy since the 1920s. Prior to that the major mineral resource was lignite coal, mined west of Lytle and shipped north by railroad. There were three contiguous mines at one time. The camp, or residential area for mine workers, was called Coal Mine and is part of the city of Lytle. Many Coal Mine residents are descendants of the early miners. Remaining



Points of Interest for Lytle

1. Turn-Around Business
2. Feed Store
3. Campsey House
4. Immacula de Concepcion Catholic Church 1902
5. La Mina Park
6. Lytle Library
7. Old Masonic Lodge
8. Original Lytle Post Office
9. Fitch Adams Store
10. Old Co-op Building
11. First Baptist Church
12. Rockpillars (Medina Irrigation Project markers)
13. Old Baptist Church
14. Site of First School Building
15. Harris Western Center
16. Atascosa River Tributary
17. Old Benton City
18. City Hall
19. St. Andrew Catholic Church
20. Lytle Community Center
21. Christain Church
22. Trinity Baptist
23. Post Office
24. Atascosa Lodge No 379/Benton City
25. Lytle Methodist Church
26. Canal of BMA Irrigation System

from those early days are the cemetery, the street and plaza names, and Immaculate Concepcion Church, still in use and the scene of annual festivals and historic tours.

For the most part, however, Lytle is a serene town, boasting a patriotic citizenry. The area produces excellent berries and melons, as well as crafts such as quilts, woodwork and needlework displayed at regular market days. Additionally, visitors can learn how cowboy and western dress developed in a fun presentation at Harris Western Wear on I-35. (Fashion in this case followed function--for example, there is a life-saving reason for those

high heels on cowboy boots!) Harris' also offers a broad array of cow pony merchandise. (Local information numbers: Chamber of Commerce 210-709-3410; Harris Western Wear 210-709-5002.)

More information

Benton was a prosperous city from 1860 to 1882. Then the I & GN. Railroad was built three miles north, where the town of Lytle originated. According to a resident who remembers Lytle in 1920, the highway ran west out of San Antonio through Lytle to Laredo. The cotton gin was on the southeast side, then Aaron's Garage, the old Cross Building, Uncle Frank Gray's store, the Lytle State Bank, Charlie Bywaters' Cafe, Sasser's Drugstore with Dr. Touchstone's office in the rear, and then Wells' and Gray's Store. Behind the store was Jason Smith's blacksmith shop. He would let kids come in and sharpen their tops and play marbles when it rained.

Next were Peter Ward's Store, Hubert Johnson's store, the post office (later Fred Lancaster's barber shop), Monroe Secrest's store, Pilgrim's Garage, and Gus Hester's lumberyard.

On the north side of the tracks to the east was the jailhouse. It measured about 6x8 feet and was made of two-by-fours stacked on top of each other with one window and a door.

Pleasanton

Pleasanton lays claim to the title "Birthplace of the cowboy" because it was this area of Texas in which the first "Longhorn" cattle round-ups began. In 1724, the San Jose Mission in San Antonio sent 177 Indians to work the Rancho de Atascosa (also called San Jose Mission Ranch) in the Pleasanton area. It was here that men in their daily working of cattle on horseback, gave birth to the techniques that developed and resulted in the creation of the "American Cowboy." Later herds were gathered in this area for the long trail rides north. The herds were initially driven to the railhead in Kansas, and then later to railheads that became closer and closer, until the cattle drive became a thing of the past.

That "heritage" is borne out in the "Cowboy" Statue in front of City Hall and preserved in the "Longhorn Museum." Pleasanton is strategically located, at the juncture of the Atascosa River and Bonita creek, just 35 miles south of downtown San Antonio. It is a major crossroads and is adjacent to Interstate 37 on the route from San Antonio to Corpus Christi.

There is a lovely "River Park" along the Atascosa River with picnic grounds, ball fields and tennis courts. The city airport is being expanded to 4200 feet which will give it small-jet capability. Pleasanton has a beautiful 18 hole golf course, nestled into the most beautiful oaks you have ever seen, which is owned by the Atascosa Cowboy Recreation Association and is open to the public.

The Longhorn Museum is located at Pleasanton's city limits on Hwy. 97 East and functions as a Visitor Information Center. The old railroad depot has been added to the complex and is a treat for train buffs.

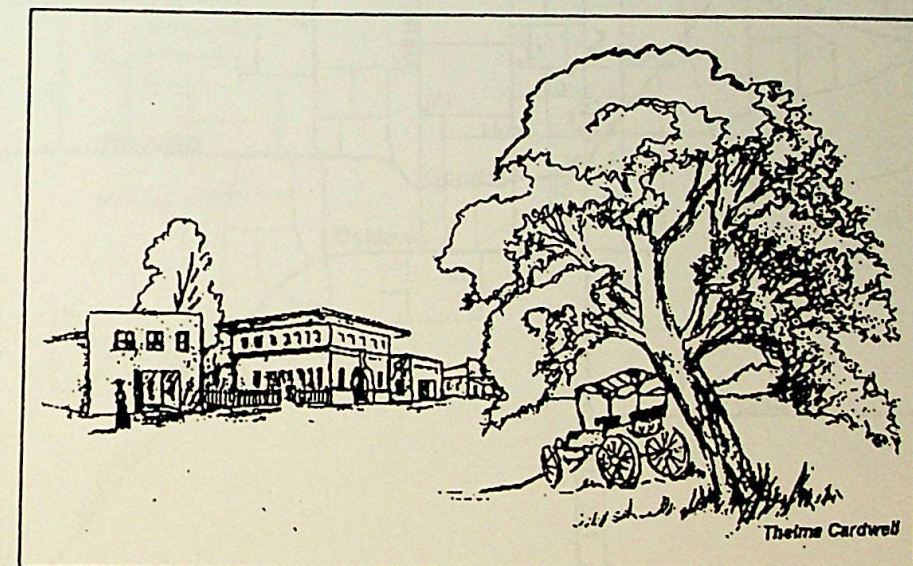
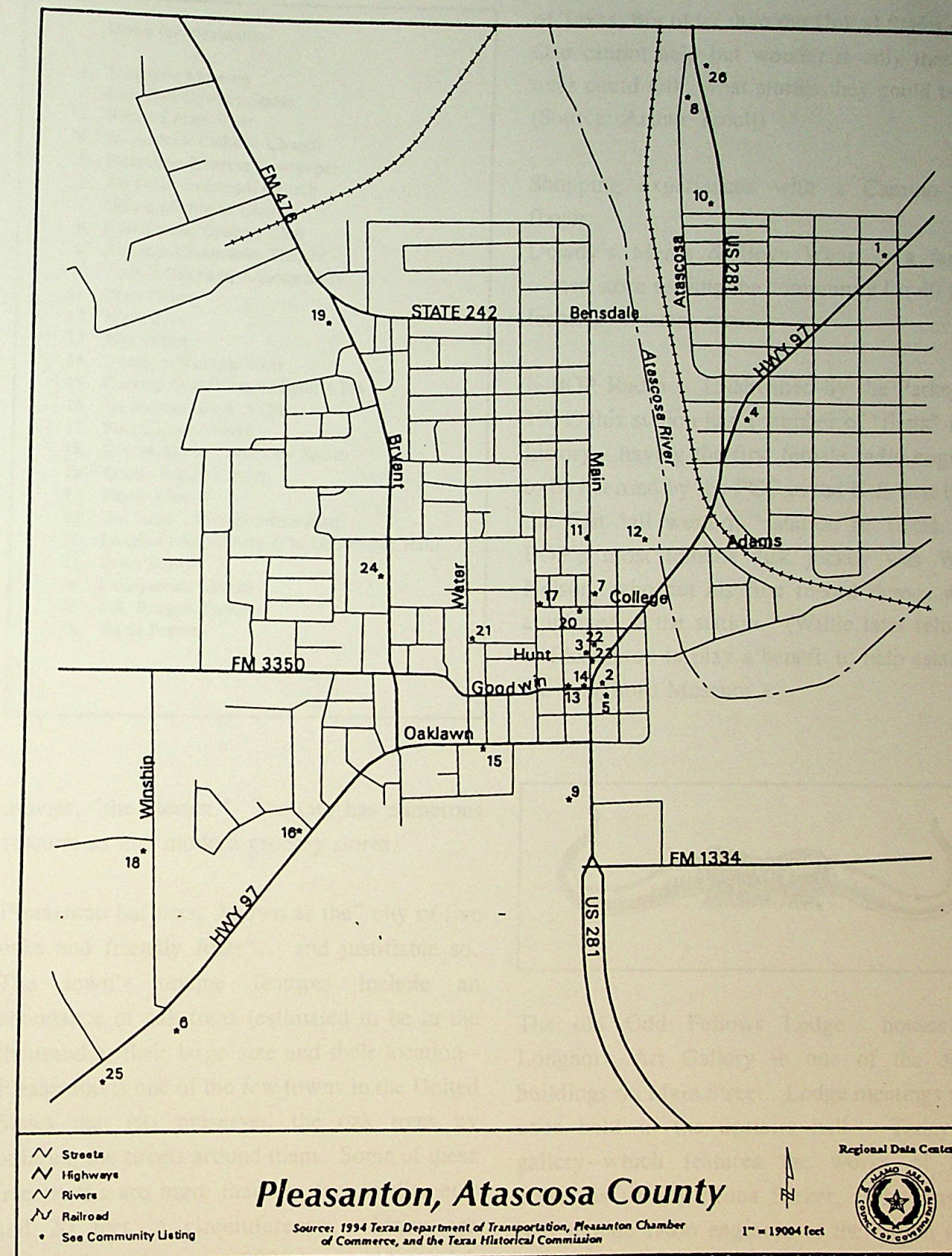


Figure 9 Downtown Pleasanton CA 1909 - Thelma Cardwell

Pleasanton is blessed with a private non-profit theater group formed over 20 years ago called "Atascosa County Troupe (ACT)" which owns its own little theater. A children's theater, the Studio Players, is a new addition to the county. Its new home is the Ernestine Theater. Pleasanton also boasts a 12-lane bowling alley - "Eagle Lanes," and a three screen indoor movie theater that presents current release





Points for Pleasanton

1. Longhorn Museum
2. City Hall/Cowboy Statue
3. Rick's Ladies Wear
4. St. Andrew Catholic Church
5. Pleasanton Express Newspaper
6. All Saints Episcopal Church
7. United Methodist Church
8. Golf Course/Country Club
9. Atascosa Community Theater
10. Jason's BBQ and Antique Store
11. Main Street
12. River Park
13. Post Office
14. Dowdy's Western Wear
15. Country Bank/Victoria Bank ATM
16. 1st National Bank ATM
17. First Baptist Church
18. Church of the Latter Day Saints
19. Trinity Baptist Church
20. Public Library
21. Old Jacob's Chapel (Methodist)
22. Longhorn Art Gallery (Old Oddfellows Hall)
23. Town Square
24. Presbyterian Church
25. J.B. Bridges Antiques
26. Wilco Peanuts

movies, "the Plestex." The city has numerous restaurants and modern grocery stores.

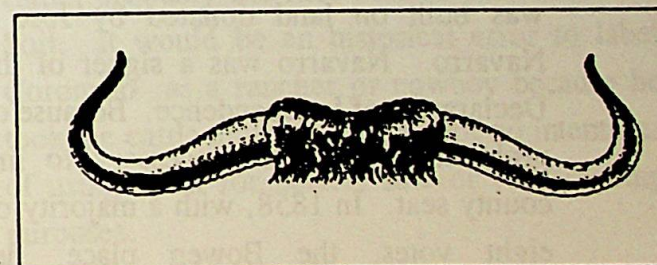
Pleasanton has been known as the "city of live oaks and friendly folks"... and justifiable so. The town's unique features include an abundance of oak trees (estimated to be in the thousands), their large size and their location--Pleasanton is one of the few towns in the United States that has preserved the oak trees by building the streets around them. Some of these tree trunks are more than six feet in diameter and 20 feet in circumference. Many are estimated to be over 300 years old, which would make them not only older than the State

of Texas, but older than the United States itself. One cannot help but wonder if only these old trees could talk, what stories they could tell." (Source: Arthur Troell)

Shopping experiences with a Camino Real flavor:

Dowdy's Men's & Boys Wear - a family-owned store serving the community for 40 years features western wear.

K-BOP Radio - Established by the Parkers in 1951, this station has a number of "firsts" in its history - having the first female radio engineer to be licensed by the FCC in the U.S. and being the first "all western" station in Texas. K-BOP's most famous disk jockey was Willie Nelson, who cut his first record demos while employed at the station. (Willie later returned to Pleasanton to play a benefit to help establish the Longhorn Museum.)



The old Odd Fellows Lodge houses the Longhorn Art Gallery in one of the oldest buildings on Main Street. Lodge meetings were once held in the upstairs hall. Today the gallery--which features the works of local artists--is run by Mona Parker, who was the first female radio engineer in the nation to be licensed by the FCC.

Pleasanton Express - Founded in 1909 as the *Pleasanton Picayune* with a subscription rate of \$1 a year and still housed in an historic structure, the *Pleasanton Express* is a friendly stop where visitors can learn of local lore and experience the special ambiance of the small town newspaper.

Rick's Company - Established in 1892, this is a five-generation business. The store moved to its present location in 1902. Once a general store, Ricks now exclusively sells the finest in ladies apparel and shoes.

(Local information numbers: 210- 569-3867 Longhorn Museum Visitor Information Center, 210-569-6313 - City Office, 210-281-2341 - Pleasanton Express News)

More Information

Atascosa County was organized by the Act of the Sixth Legislators of the State of Texas, January 25, 1856. The first county courthouse was built on land donated by Jose Antonio Navarro. Navarro was a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence. Because of Indian problems, it became necessary to move the county seat. In 1858, with a majority of ninety eight votes, the Bowen place, near the confluence of the Bonita Creek and the Atascosa Creek, was selected. Mr. John Bowen, owner of the Bowen tract, donated land to the new municipality. Thus the City of Pleasanton was born.

Why here? Two old Spanish Roads came together here along the banks of the Atascosa under the big oak trees. The older Laredo Trail ran just east of present-day Pleasanton and the

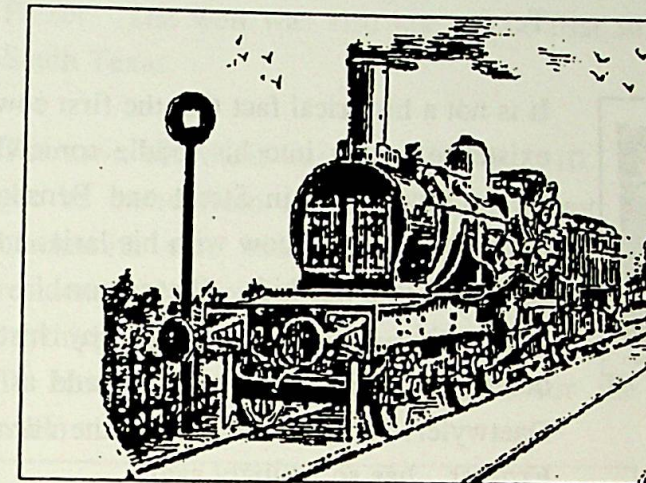
newer Laredo Road ran very near to the present day Main Street of Pleasanton. Soon settlers began to arrive. The first to build a house was E. B. Thomas, who also had the first store. Other early settlers were Tobias Kelley, Calvin Turner, Judge A. C. Fairman, J. H. Dossey, John W. Slayton and V. Weldon. Slayton was elected District Attorney in 1858 and 1860. After the Civil War, Slayton was appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Texas. In 1857, the Methodist Church was established with the Baptist following in 1866.

The Post Office was opened in Pleasanton in 1858. In 1861, Pleasanton had a dozen families, two blacksmith shops, and three lawyers. Pleasanton became school district Number 1 in 1860. The Old Rock School, located on College Street, and which now has a Historical Marker, was built in 1875.

Early Pleasanton did not escape Indian raids. In 1861 Indians made a daring raid into Atascosa County. In Pleasanton, two people were killed, one person captured, and two were wounded. Warnings of Indians were still given in local newspapers as late as 1873. In 1870, the population was 206. In the 1870s, the *Western Stock Journal* was published in Pleasanton. During the trail driving days, the Stock Raiser Association of Western Texas often had their annual meeting in Pleasanton.

Through the efforts of several local businessmen, the San Antonio, Uvalde, and Gulf Railroad (known locally as the "Sausage") was persuaded to come through Pleasanton in 1912. The railroad repair shops, the round house, tie-dipping vats were all located in

Pleasanton, next to the present road going to the golf course. All that remains of the S. A. U. & G. R. R., other than the train is the old wooden Pleasanton Depot, which contains artifacts from the S. A. U. & G. Railroad and is now located at the Longhorn Museum grounds.



Pleasanton, founded in 1856, was named by John Bowen for an early settler, John Pleasant-- who with the financial assistance of Henry L. Radaz, in September 1858 founded this town at the juncture of the Atascosa River and the Bonita Creek, as the county seat of Atascosa County. The first courthouse in Pleasanton (second in the county) stood on this site.

In an area thick with longhorns since Spanish and Indian days, Pleasanton became a cattleman's capitol, beginning in the 1860s. The Stock Raiser's Association of Western Texas often convened there. This was the place of publication of the *Western Stock Journal*, founded in 1873. There gathered the hardest and most skillful cowboys, including those driving herds from Mexican Border to shipping points in Kansas. In the spring of 1873 they

drove 43, 000 Atascosa County cattle up the trail.

Pleasanton was county seat until 1911, and still grows. In 1961 it absorbed North Pleasanton, founded 1912 as site for the SAU & G railroad shops, the county's largest city, it is famous for its live oak trees, and commerce in beef, peanuts, and petroleum. (Source: Texas State Historical Marker)

How "Birthplace of the Cowboy" got its name:

In 1521, two years after Cortez conquered the kingdoms of Moctezuma (Mexico), Gregorio de Villolobos brought six heifers and one bull to Mexico from Santa Domingo where they had been left by Columbus on his second voyage to the New World. It is certain that other cattle were brought in later, for in 1541, when Coronado left Mexico in search of the Seven Cities of Cibola, he took with him 500 head of cattle, probably the first ever to walk on Texas Soil. It would be an historical error to label Coronado as a rancher or cowboy because he took the cattle along for food with no intentions of using them for barter, sale or for breeding purposes.

While the cattle in Mexico were evolving and adapting as their ancestors had done in Africa and Andalusia, the mission churches became interested in raising cattle. The first mission established west of the Neches River began raising cattle in 1690 from seed stock brought from the San Luis Potosi area. Even then the cattle were harvested with guns, bows and arrows and knives for there was no outlet for beef. Only the hides, horns, bones and tallow

were gathered. In later years, hogs were imported to aid the vultures in devouring the carcasses. Other mission ranches were established in Texas. (Presidio La Bahia and Mission Espiritu Santo at Goliad had extensive herds, and Rancho de Las Cabras in Floresville was a sheep and cattle ranch for San Antonio's Mission Espada.)

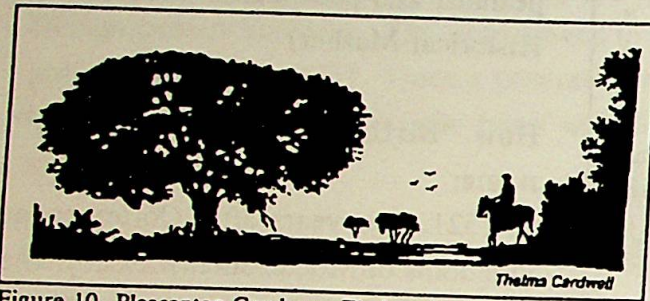


Figure 10 Pleasanton Cowboy - Thelma Cardwell

When individuals got into cattle raising, proper identification of ownership had to be resolved. It was then that cattlemen started using ear marks, brands, and even carved numerals on horns. In order to catch the cattle to mark or brand, they had to work out a system. Spaniards had brought the horse over to the New World; the invention of the stirrup straps multiplied the uses for which the saddle could be used; and the lariat--also introduced by the Spaniards--was discovered to be a "catch and hold" item. These were just the tools needed, along with the horse's versatility, to be used in placing identification marks upon the cattle. It was then and there that the idea of working cattle "cowboy style" was born and put into operation.

South Texas was more attractive to ranchers and even the cattle for these reasons: the climate was milder, the grass was taller and more palatable, and the predatory animals were fewer. It was only natural, therefore, that South Texas should become the incubator of the cattle industry, which encompasses Pleasanton, Texas.

It is not a historical fact that the first cowboy in existence swung into his saddle somewhere in the vicinity of Main Street and Bensdale and rode off to catch a cow with his lariat and burn his brand into her hide. Pleasanton was within the area described by history as being the cradle of the cowboy, and as W. K. Daetwyler, former publisher of the *Pleasanton Express*, has so fittingly said:

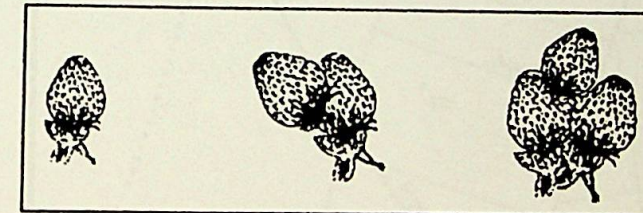
"...any other town within the area could have made the same valid claim, but Pleasanton was the first to stake that claim, and historic justice is being served when the slogan, THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE COWBOY, is applied to Pleasanton."

(Source: Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce & *Pleasanton Express*)

Poteet

During pioneer days, the area of Poteet was mostly sand, cactus and jack rabbits. In 1904, two years after a severe drought destroyed the cotton crops, the first artesian water well was drilled in Atascosa County near the area of Poteet. The well was also one of the first in South Texas.

The town of Poteet was organized in 1910. It got its name from Francis Marion Poteet, a blacksmith who received the mail for area residents. Ironically, no street, monument or anything else in the town was named for Henry T. Mumme, who donated the land for the community.



Today, Poteet is known as the "Strawberry Capitol of Texas." The Annual Strawberry Festival, held the second weekend in April, attracts an average of 100,000 people from all over the world. Other examples of the claim as Strawberry Capitol are a water tower painted like the sweet fruit and the strawberry statue that is proclaimed to be the "World's Largest Strawberry"... not to mention the acres of land that are used to grow strawberries each year. The citizens of Poteet take pride in their town and the events held there each year. Just stop by in April or October and see for yourself. Poteet did not become an incorporated city until 1926, some fifteen years following the date of its birth.

By 1926 Poteet was feeling its oats. Artesian water had literally made what was once a wasteland bloom. The small town was reaping the rewards of a prosperous population. It was time to become an incorporated city. (Local information number: Chamber of Commerce 210-626-1000.)

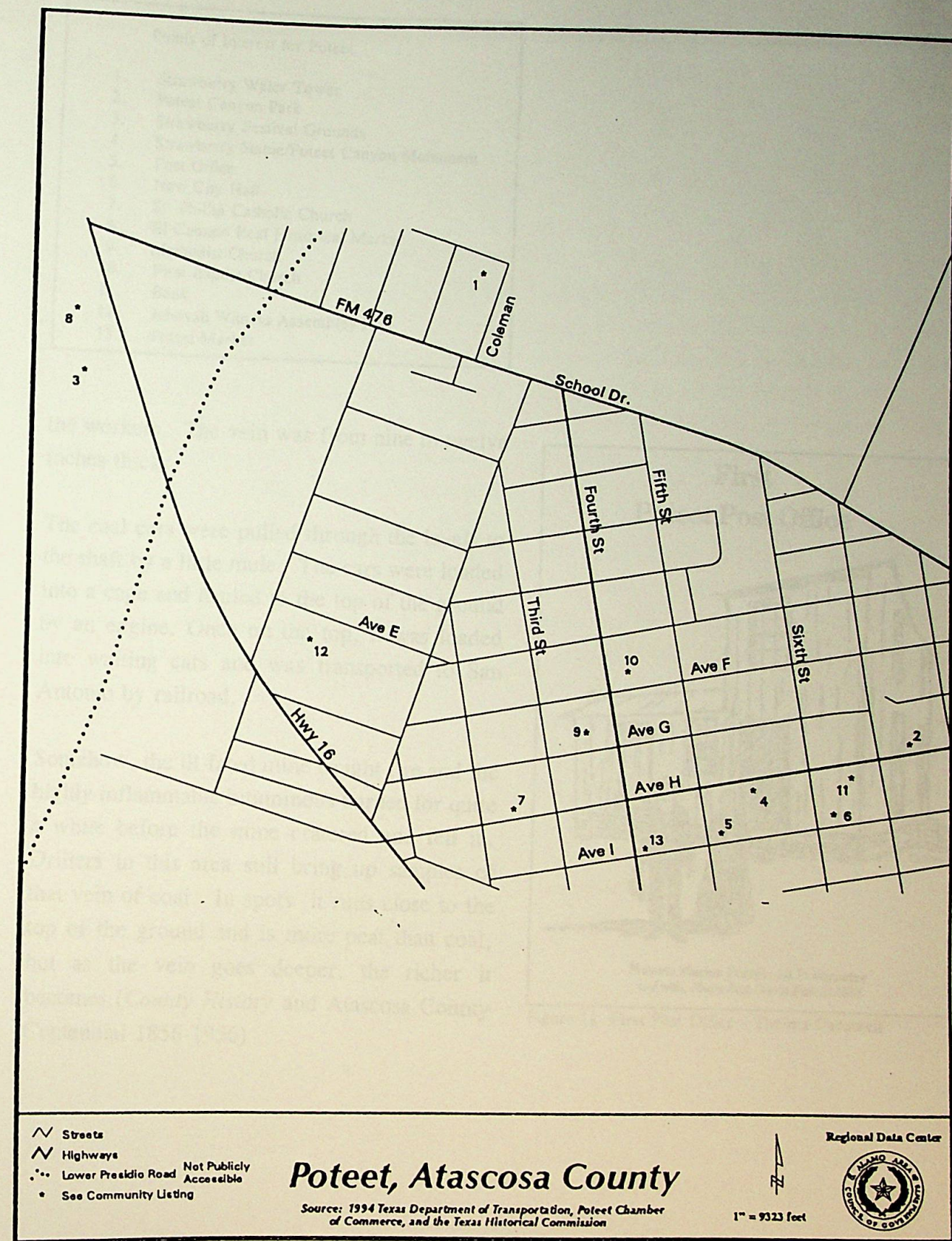
More Information

Most Poteet people are aware that a layer of coal underlies the rich soil on which the fabulous Poteet strawberries are grown but most of them are not aware that this same layer of coal once supplied fuel to a majority of San Antonio.

The first commercial coal operation was started many years ago by Marius Chieuse, a Frenchman who came to the United States with the Castro Colony from Weidelsheim, Alsace, in France. He purchased several thousand acres of land, including land once owned by Colonel Jose Antonio Navarro, the Texas patriot.

Mr. Chieuse dug the high-grade lignite, and hauled it in wagon train loads to San Antonio, where it was sold for fuel. A gas plant for converting the lignite into gas was built and for many years until the development of other fuels was the only gas supply in San Antonio.

The commercial development of the coal mining operation had started in Poteet, prompted by the coal which repeatedly turned up when artesian wells were drilled in the area. A mine was located south of town between Rutledge Hollow and the railroad track. In order to mine the coal, the developers sank a shaft to about eighty feet then dug another ten feet to open levels for



Points of Interest for Poteet

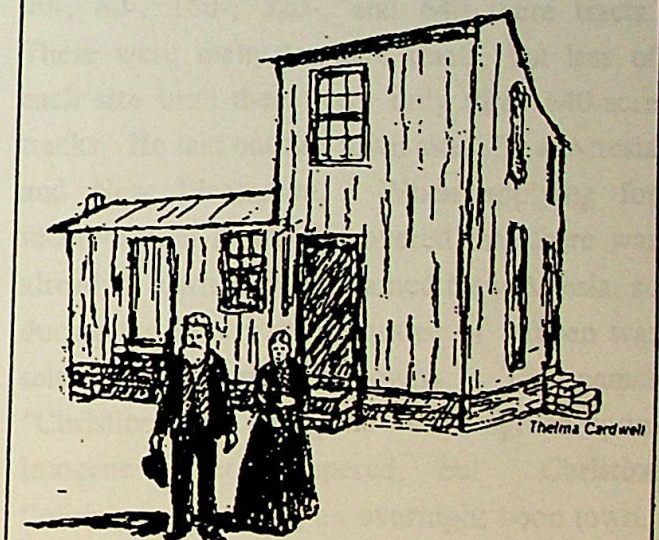
1. Strawberry Water Tower
2. Poteet Canyon Park
3. Strawberry Festival Grounds
4. Strawberry Statue/Poteet Canyon Monument
5. Post Office
6. New City Hall
7. St. Phillip Catholic Church
8. El Camino Real Historical Marker
9. Methodist Church
10. First Baptist Church
11. Bank
12. Jehovah Witness Assembly Hall
13. Poteet Marker

the workers. The vein was from nine to twelve inches thick.

The coal cars were pulled through the levels to the shaft by a little mule. The cars were loaded into a cage and hauled to the top of the ground by an engine. Once on the top, it was loaded into waiting cars and was transported to San Antonio by railroad.

Somehow, the ill-fated mine caught fire and the highly inflammable bituminous burned for quite a while before the mine cratered and fell in. Drillers in this area still bring up samples of that vein of coal. In spots it runs close to the top of the ground and is more peat than coal, but as the vein goes deeper, the richer it becomes. (County History and Atascosa County Centennial 1856-1956)

First Poteet Post Office



Francis Marion Poteet - 1st Postmaster
and wife, Mary Ann Davis Poteet 1893

Figure 11 First Post Office - Thelma Cardwell

Other Historic Communities in Atascosa County

Campbellton

This community is named for James Campbell, an Irish immigrant who came to Atascosa County in 1857. Campbell acquired ranch lands and also established a store near his ranch. The Campbell Store subsequently became the relay station for the mail route from San Antonio to Oakville and points south. The Bell Branch Post Office was established in 1874. The town had a school and two churches. After over a century, the surrounding ranch lands are still prime cattle country. (Sources: *Atascosa County History*)

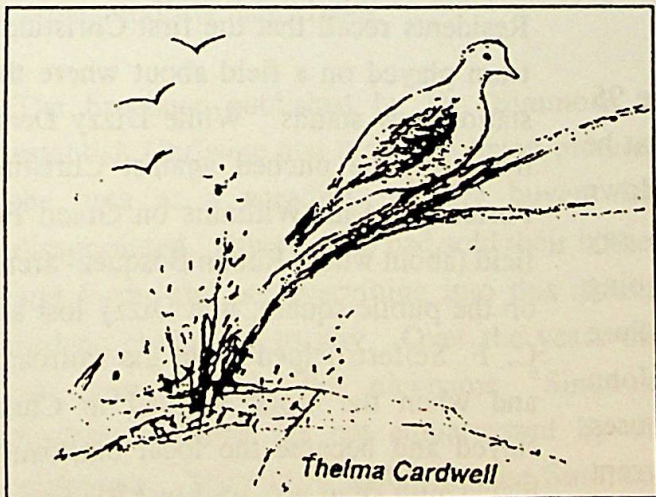


Figure 12 Dove - Thelma Cardwell

Christine

Established 1909 by Missouri medicine man and promoter Charles S. Simmons, an interesting history surrounds this gentle rural community, incorporated on October 22, 1910. Dr. Simmons, a Missouri medicine man and promoter of his Simmon's Liver Regulator, bought 95,000 acres from D. & A. Oppenheimer and subdivided it into 10-, 20-, 40-, 80-, 160-, 320-, and 640- acre tracts. There were many ten-acre tracts, but less of each size until there were only three 640-acre tracts. He laid out two town sites, New Artesia and New Pleasanton. When applying for incorporation it was discovered that there was already a town in Texas named New Artesia, so during the lottery a committee of women was selected to name the towns. The names "Christine" and "Imogene" were agreed upon. Imogene never prospered, but Christine flourished, becoming an overnight boon town.

It is said that the Oppenheimers had sold and repossessed the ranch more than once. They were shocked when Dr. Simmons opened up his satchel and paid them in cash. John Martin says the story goes that Dan Oppenheimer cried real tears when telling his ranch hands of the sale. (Local information number: City Offices 210-784-3320.)

(Source: *Atascosa County History*)

More Information

The flamboyant "doctor" [Simmons] published a booklet and circulated it worldwide advertising his subdivision and land sale. The system of sale required buyers to pay \$90 per package, consisting of a lot in Christine, a lot in Imogene, and a farm tract, size unknown. Some say bid applications were sold for \$210 giving buyers the right to bid on farm tracts, including two town lots. Brown Lake, just east of Christine, was the designated site of the sale that began on October 14, 1909, and lasted more than two weeks. More than 5,000 people from around the world were present for the drawing. Dr. Simmons and his trustees placed the numbers representing over 6500 farm tracts of various sizes into an old black metal suitcase. They used two similar suitcases to hold the numbers of Christine and Imogene lots. The buyers had no way of knowing if they were buying ten acres or 640 acres until they drew their numbers. There were some 6,500 acres unsold at the end of the lottery and Alonzo M. Peeler, Sr. bought them.

There were several old ranch houses on the 95,000 acres, and Dr. Simmons announced that he would give these houses to "old broken-down preachers." Mr. Alonzo Peeler used to say "there was more preaching and praying going on there than I ever heard before or since. Sure did bring out a lot of preachers." Mr. John Martin recalls several of these old ranch houses such as the Hall Ranch house near the current Peerler Ranch headquarters; the Brown Ranch house near Brown Lake; the Campbell Ranch house on property now owned by the Schultz family; and the Black Hill Ranch house more recently known as Jungerman's at Imogene,

which old-timers say was built on top of a high black hill and used as an Indian lookout because one could see for miles in any direction from that point. Dr. Simmons reportedly used the Black Hill Ranch house to entertain prospective buyers who came to "see" before putting up any money. Dr. Simmons built a railroad called the Artesian Belt Railroad. With it came the life of Christine.

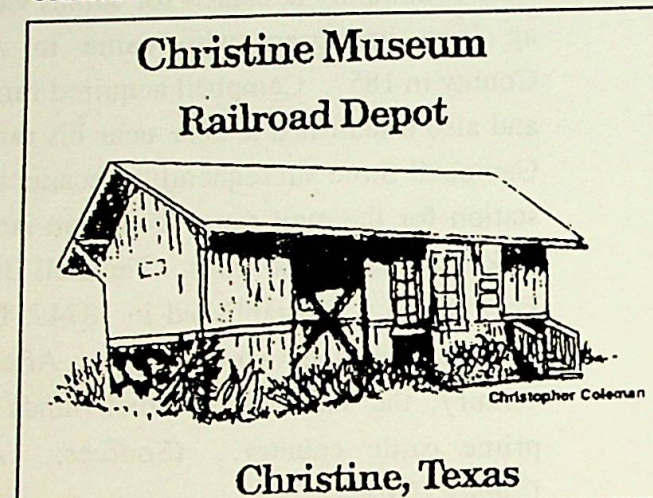


Figure 13 Old Christine Depot - Christopher Coleman

Residents recall that the first Christine baseball team played on a field about where the Exxon station now stands. While Dizzy Dean was in the Army he pitched against Christine's Bud Foster and Sam Williams on Green Franklin's field (about where Ruben Bosquez' arena is) and on the public square, and Dizzy lost a lot. C. F. Seifert helped build the railroad bridges and when the work stopped in Christine he stayed and became the local blacksmith. His blacksmith shop was on Lot #2077 on the north side of Avenue I between Fifth and Sixth Streets. He invented a cattle dehorner, which he tempered in tallow, that sold both in his shop and in Kallison's Store in San Antonio.

Fritz also rescued many marooned families after a flood in 1912 or 1913.

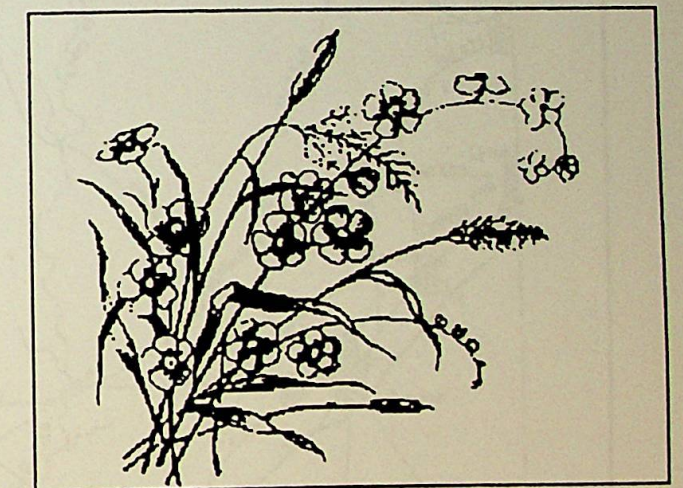
Christine and the surrounding area was used by the U. S. Army for maneuvers. The city square and whole area became "tent city" all the way through the Peeler Ranch to the *San Miguel* River. Beer joints sprang up outside the city limits. There was a street curfew. The payroll was so large that armed guards were on hand, and Dewey Smith said he did a land office business in money orders.

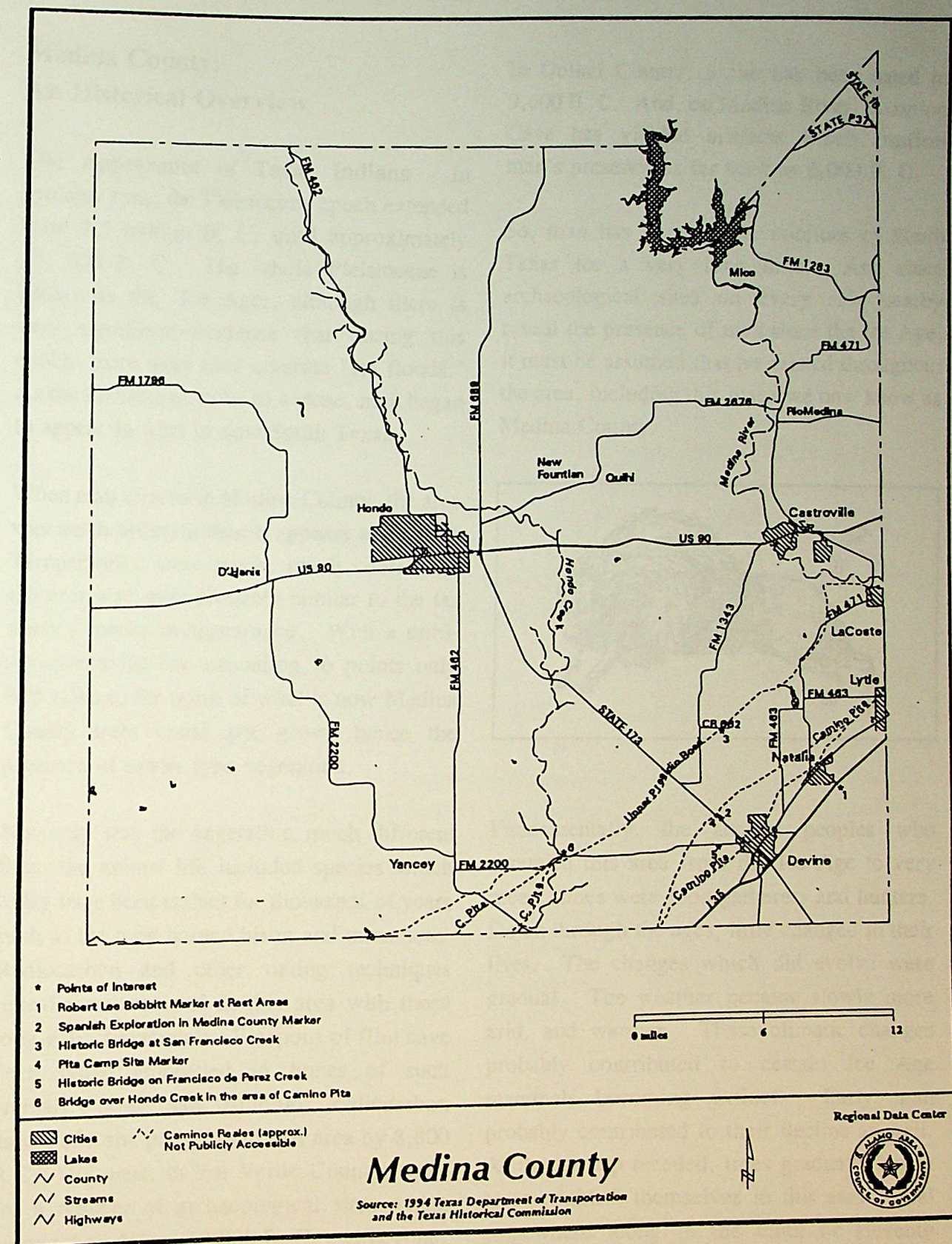
William P. Wileys and W. G. Wileys and James S. Raders came in 1916. J. A. Lowrie brought his livestock and his dismantled house from New Mexico by train in 1919. Christine was the leading cattle-shipping point in the county until the twenties, shipping up to 100 cars of cattle daily. Ranching was Christine's most important industry in its early days. This is a natural honey-producing area and bees were shipped in from as far as the Dakotas every winter until the late sixties.

The brochure published by Dr. Simmons to establish Christine and his subdivision pictured the area as a paradise. Many buyers left disappointed. Others, who had sold their homes and farms and put everything into this dream, had no choice but to stay. Over the years this has earned them the nickname "Simmons Suckers." Most are not embarrassed by the nickname. They have withstood the Simmons lottery, the 1919 Gulf Storm, the Great Depression, the loss of many young men in two World Wars, the 1980 flood, and numerous severe droughts. This is home to the descendants of those first settlers, and they are

a good lot of people. They still gather annually to visit and reminisce.

Christine is still mainly a ranching community, a large town with a small population, since most of the ranchers moved onto their ranches with the coming of rural electricity and telephones. The population has increased in the last few years, partly due to the activity at the Atascosa Mining Company and the San Miguel Power Plant on the Peeler Ranch south of town, and partly due to several families coming back home to retire. Who knows, Christine may make a comeback yet! (Source: Atascosa County History)





Medina County: An Historical Overview

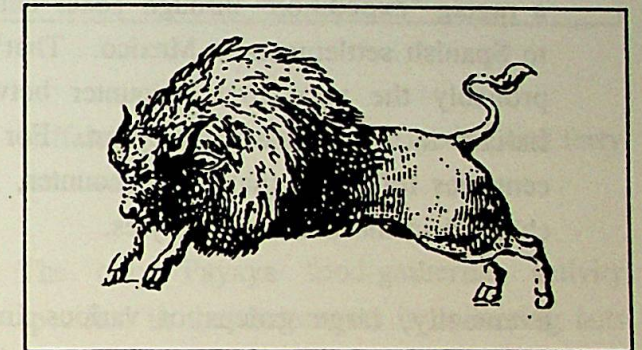
The Appearance of Texas Indians - In geologic time, the Pleistocene epoch extended from 1.5 million B. C. until approximately 10, 000 B. C. The whole Pleistocene is known as the "Ice Age", although there is very significant evidence that during this epoch, there were four separate "ice floods." As the Pleistocene came to a close, man began to appear in what is now South Texas.

When man arrived in Medina County, the area was much different than it appears at present. Temperatures were much, much cooler and the area was most probably similar to the far north's tundra in appearance. With a semi-permanent ice cap extending to points only 800 miles to the north of what is now Medina County trees could not grow, hence the presence of tundra-type vegetation.

Not only was the vegetation much different then, the animal life included species which today have been extinct for thousands of years such as the long-horned bison and mammoth. Radiocarbon and other dating techniques reveal man coexisted in this area with those long-extinct mammals. Weapons of flint have been found embedded in bones of such animals. Near San Antonio, radiocarbon dating of a site puts man in that area by 8,800 B.C. Out west, in Val Verde County, there are a number of archaeological sites which radiocarbon date to 10,000 B. C. and beyond.

In Goliad County, a site has been dated to 9,600 B. C. And, on Medina River, Scorpion Cave has yielded artifacts which confirm man's presence as far back as 6,000 B. C.

So, man has been in the confines of South Texas for a very long time. And since archaeological sites on every side nearby reveal the presence of man since the Ice Age, it must be assumed that he existed throughout the area, including this place we now know as Medina County.



Fundamentally, the ancient peoples who occupied this area from the Ice Age to very recent times were food gatherers and hunters. Down through the ages, little changed in their lives. The changes which did evolve were gradual. The weather became slowly more arid, and warmer. These climatic changes probably contributed to certain Ice Age mammals becoming extinct. Early man probably contributed to their decline as well. As the ice cap receded, trees gradually began to re-establish themselves in this area. And somewhere along in the tenth or eleventh century A. D., there was a great technological

breakthrough for the Indians in this area. Prior to that time, the atlatl, or throwing-stick, was used to propel their spears. But along in the Tenth or Eleventh Century time period the bow and arrow appeared. Later still, the Spanish explorers introduced the horse. Those were some of the more significant changes which occurred in the history of local man.

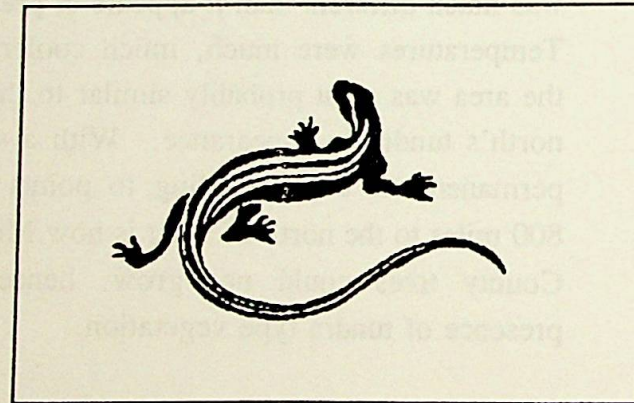
A significant milestone occurred in 1528. In that year, the Spaniard Cabeza de Vaca was shipwrecked on the Texas Gulf Coast and led a ragtag "expedition" through Texas enroute to Spanish settlements in Mexico. That was probably the very first encounter between Indians in this area and European. For two centuries following that first encounter, little changed in the Indians' lifestyles.

Eventually, large groups of various Indian tribes began to relocate into the area, such as the Apache and later the Comanche who were originally located in northeastern New Mexico. Pressure from the Ute and Navajo to the west pushed them eastward into Central-West Texas. Their move east pushed the Lipan Apache into the South Texas and Laredo area. The Kickapoo settled in what is today the Dallas area. The Cherokee and many other groups arrived in northeastern Texas including the Osage, Choctaw and Savanna.

The Comanche, with some 10,000 or more people, was the strongest force in Texas during the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

One source indicates the Comanche could mount 4,500 warriors.

The arrival and concentration of these powerful forces had a devastating impact on the loosely organized South Texas Indians, or "Coahuiltecans," who had occupied this area for centuries. These primitive peoples subsisted by gathering foods which included wild fruits, berries, mesquite beans, acorns, persimmons and pecan. They ate snakes, lizards, terrapins and other reptiles. Also, they hunted bison, white tail deer, javelina, rabbits, rats, mice and other small animals.



Living in the Medina County area in those early times was one of the Coahuiltecan groups of which some information has been published...the Payaya Indians. Like other Coahuiltecans, the Payaya lived along permanent streams or by waterholes, in small units of fewer than 100 people.

In the book, *Digging into South Texas Prehistory*, Thomas R. Hester had this to say:

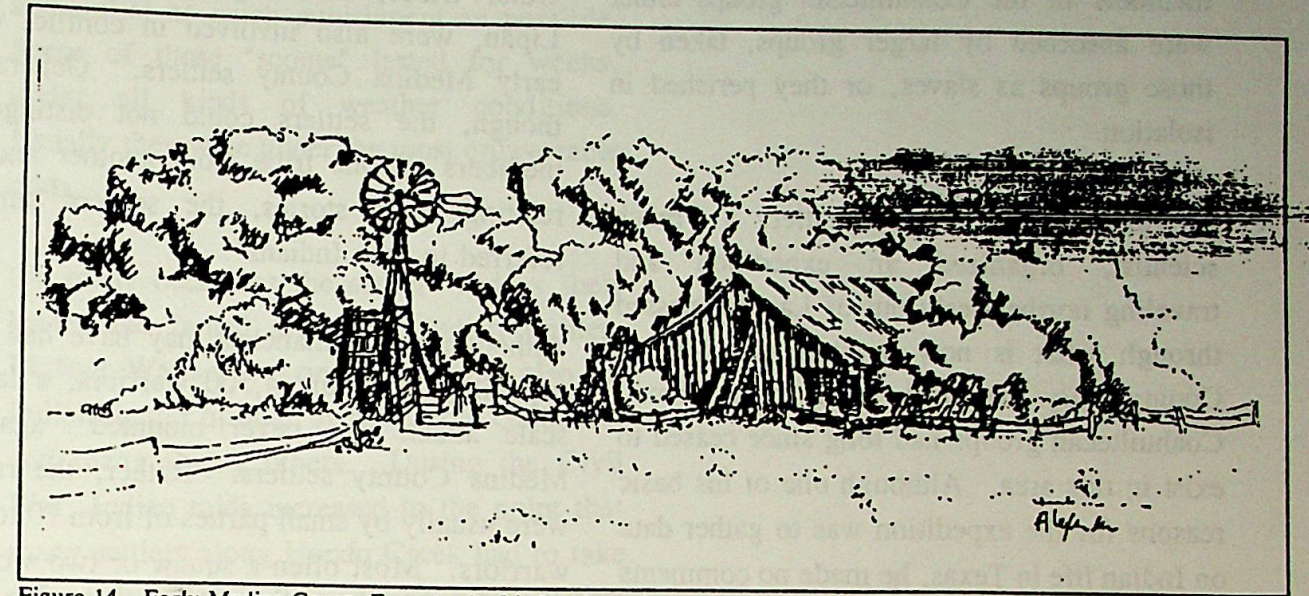


Figure 14 Early Medina County Farmstead - Linda Alexander

Although earlier documents never actually mention the Payaya hunting specific animals, they frequently refer to the abundance of game in the area, especially bison, and in precisely the same localities where Payaya settlements were encountered between 1690 and 1709. For example, in 1691, Mazanet repeatedly recorded bison seen along the route of the Teran expedition. On June 11, after crossing the Hondo Creek above its junction with the Frio River and reaching the headwater tributaries of San Miguel Creek [Chacon and Francisco Creeks, in southeast Medina County] he wrote that "on this day there were a great number of buffaloes and deer."

Then on June 13, shortly before arriving at the Payaya encampment on the San Antonio River: "On this day, there were so many

buffaloes that the horses stampeded and forty ran away".

The only Payaya food-gathering activity specified in the documents is collecting nuts from pecan trees. This was recorded by Espinosa in 1709 in connection with his observation of a Payaya encampment on the Medina River.

Some of the groups which were neighbors with the Payaya were the Juanca, who lived in what is now northwest Frio County in 1691, the Cachopostale, who were located downstream on the Frio and Nueces.

For all these small groups, great changes occurred in the 1700s. Arrival of the much larger and far better organized Comanche, Lipan, Delaware, Kickapoo and Cherokee groups simply swept them away. Individual

members of the Coahuiltecan groups either were absorbed by larger groups, taken by those groups as slaves, or they perished in isolation.

In 1828 Jean Louis Berlandier, a French scientist, organized an expedition and traveling northeasterly out of Laredo, passed through what is now southeastern Medina County. By that time, many of the small Coahuiltecan groups had long since ceased to exist in this area. Although one of his basic reasons for the expedition was to gather data on Indian life in Texas, he made no comments about any of the Coahuiltecan being present in this area. However, by the time of Berlandier's expedition, yet another force had concentrated in Texas-the Anglo settlers.

In 1844, when the first group of Alsatians arrived on the Medina River, the Lipan and Delaware were living along the Medina River, according to reports by A. J. Sowell (*Early Settlers and Indian Fighters of Southwest Texas*). The Comanche lived to the west. Both Lipan and Delaware soon left the area and in 1852 a party of Delaware was located along the Guadalupe River. It is possible the Lipan moved to the south to join others of their group near Laredo.

From 1844, when the first settlers arrived in strength, until 1877 a continuing conflict raged in Medina County between early settlers and the Indians. The great majority of confrontations were between settler and Comanche.

Other tribes, including the Kickapoo and Lipan, were also involved in conflict with early Medina County settlers. Generally, though, the settlers could not distinguish members of one tribe from another and in relating their stories, the settlers simply referred to "the Indians".

Although the Comanches may have had the capability to mount 4,500 warriors, a large scale attack was never mounted against Medina County settlers. Rather, the raids were usually by small parties of from 10 to 30 warriors. Most often a squaw or two would accompany the party to cook and perform other chores.

Sometimes the Indians came on foot. At other times, they were on horseback. They were armed with lances, bow and arrow and firearms including muzzle-loading rifles and pistols. Later, they had repeating arms.

Attacks came infrequently. Often the settlers became complacent, when they did, the Indians were more successful. When the Indians were in the area, the settlers quickly spread the word to their neighbors.

Settlers were sometimes protected by Captain Jack Hays and his Texas Rangers. They often camped on the Medina River. In D'Hanis, Fort Lincoln was at times garrisoned by federal troops. Mostly, protection from the Indians was left to the settlers themselves and they always responded. Sometimes there may have been only five or six men, but they

pursued the Indians to recover their horses and inflict as much punishment as possible. Some of those "scouts" lasted for weeks, under all kinds of weather conditions. Usually they were under the most unfavorable odds.

On many occasions the settlers had as their leader the famed scout and Indian fighter, Bigfoot Wallace. Lon Moore was also an Indian fighter of note, as were Tom Galbreath and many, many others. During the Civil War, Indian raids increased to the point that many settlers along Hondo Creek had to take refuge in Castroville. Raids were almost commonplace until the mid-1870s. By the end of that decade, however, a combination of events saw the end of Indian forays in Medina County.

By the 1870s Medina County had become more thickly settled, the government had continually pursued its policies of confining Indians to reservations, and the Indian's food supply from hunting had almost ceased to exist as the buffalo were almost exterminated. On April 22, 1877, the last known Indian attack in Medina County occurred four miles west of Devine. (Source: Henry B. Briscoe in *Medina County History*)

HISTORIC COMMUNITIES OF MEDINA COUNTY: INSERT MAP (S) OF CASTROVILLE

Camino Real Communities of Medina County

Castroville

Known as The Little Alsace of Texas," this charming town was established in 1844 by settlers from Alsace, the Rhine provinces of France. They were brought by empresario Henri Castro, who received a large grant of land from the Republic of Texas for his colonists. Castro was second only to Stephen F. Austin in the number of settlers he brought to Texas.

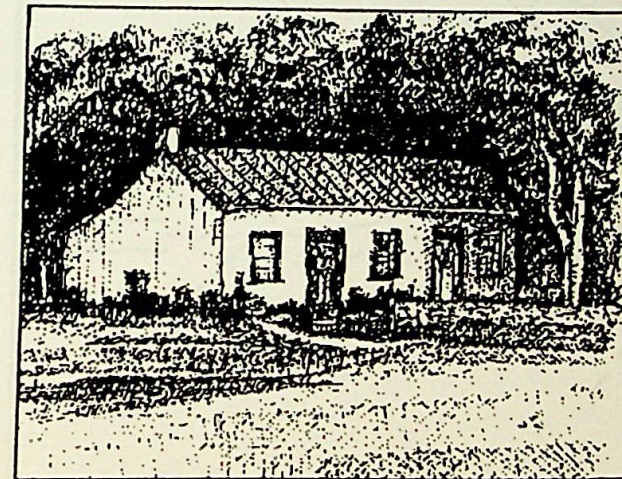


Figure 15 Henri Castro Homestead - N.R. Kelly

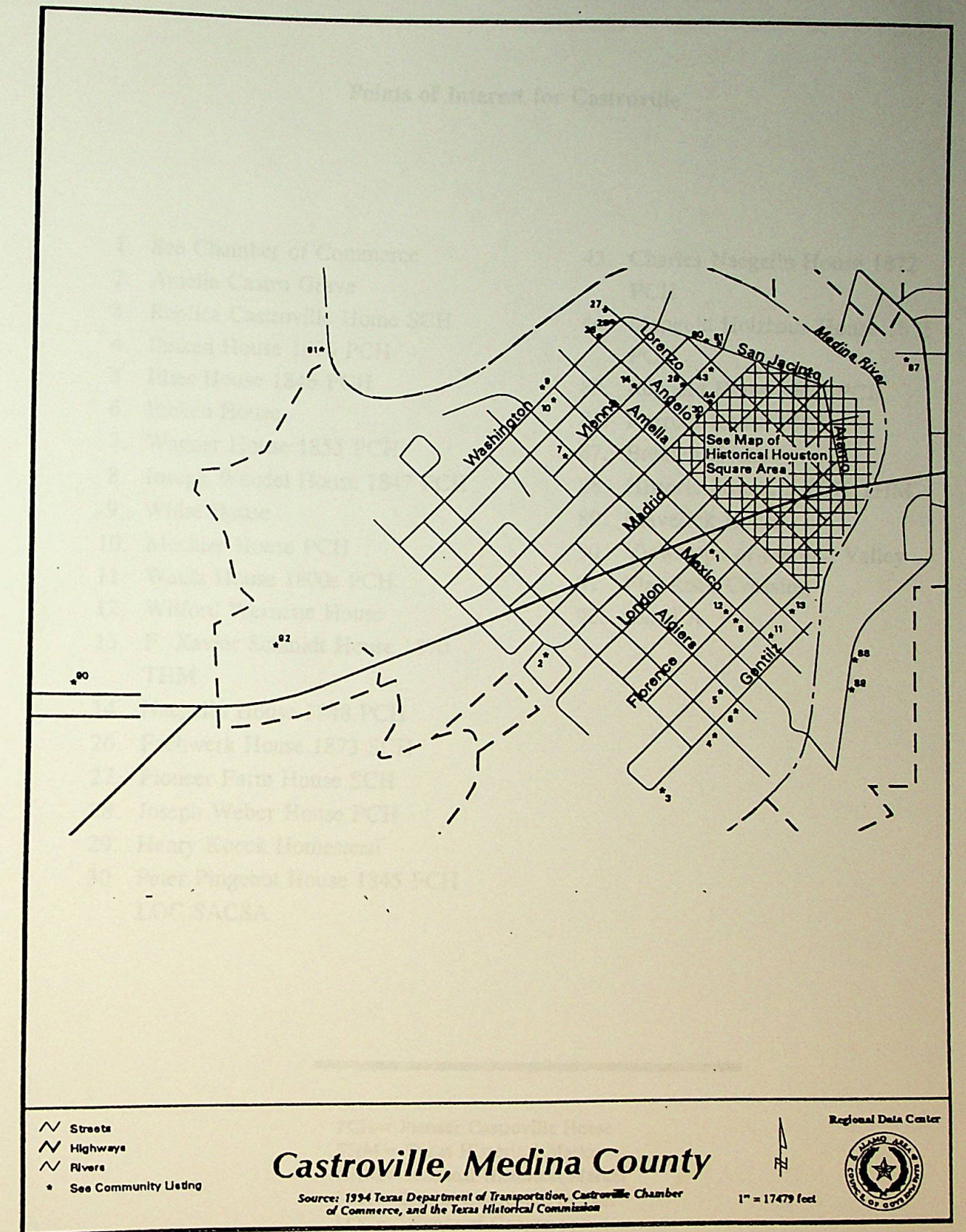
Castroville is noted for the distinctive architecture of its old homes. No two are alike, but all are built with thick walls of native stone; their asymmetrical roof line makes them easy to pick out. They all have fireplaces; one house has five. The entire old part of town has been designated a National Historic District. A well-marked walking tour

(you can drive it if you like) passes many of the old homes and points of interest like Landmark Inn State Historical Site, the Moye Center, the City Hall (once the county courthouse), and the first (1844) and third (1870) St. Louis churches.

Many of the residents of the Castroville area trace their ancestry back to those first settlers of 150 years ago. Alsatian names are in the phone book. Alsatian customs are still in daily use. Alsatian foods are still served in homes and restaurants. The Alsatian language, an archaic German dialect, can still be heard when old-timers get together. St. Louis Days, held the Sunday closest to and before August 25th (Feast Day for the Patron Saint of the Parish--St. Louis), is one of the oldest and largest single-day church festivals in the State. This picturesque community and the surrounding county have attracted a number of resident artists. Shoppers enjoy the quaint specialty and antique shops, as well as the beautiful works of the talented members of the Medina Art League. Castroville, *The Little Alsace of Texas*. (Local information number: Chamber of Commerce 210-538-3142.)

More information

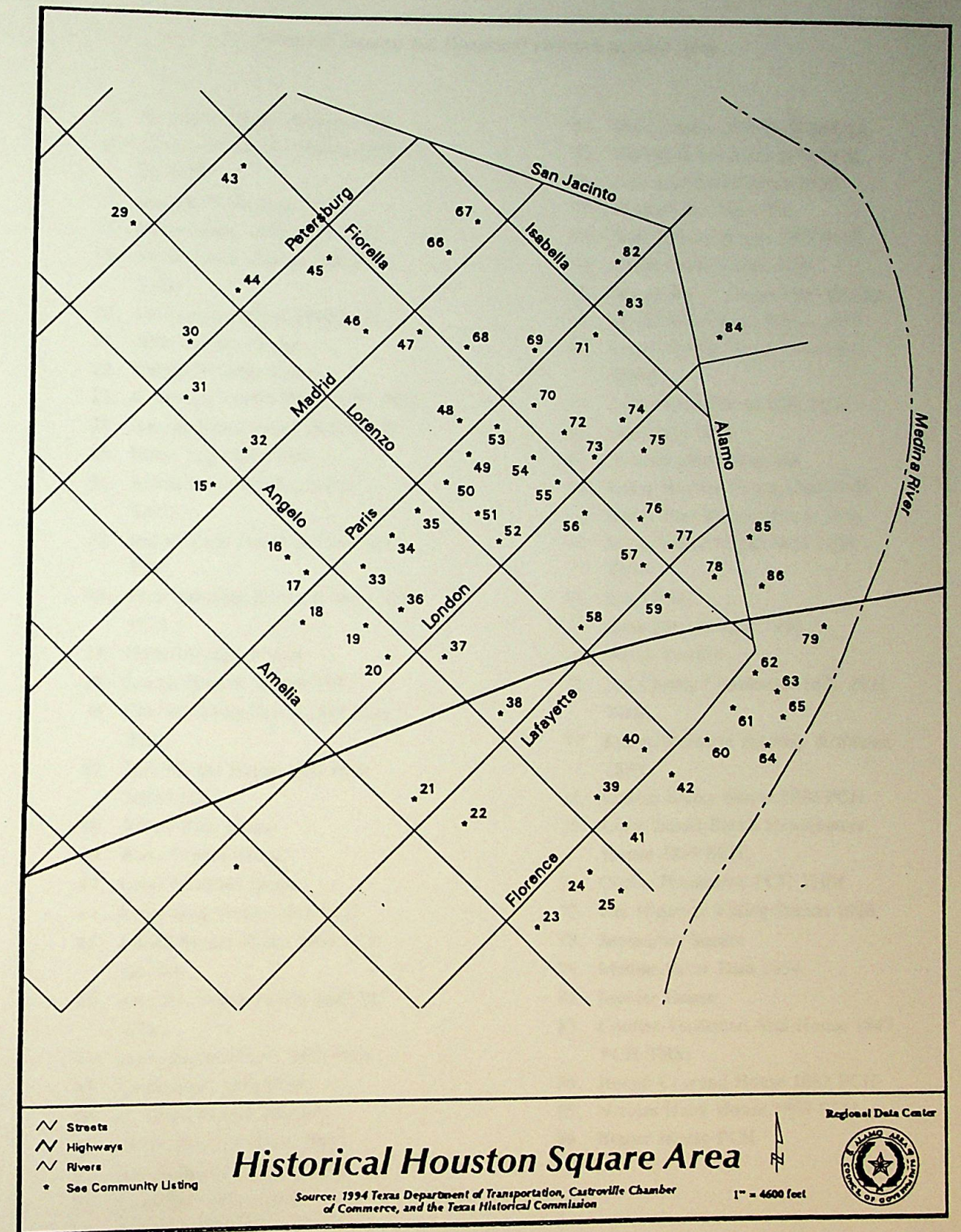
Castroville dates back to the days of the Republic of Texas. An impresario by the name of Henri Castro, a Frenchman of Jewish faith and Portuguese ancestry and a naturalized American citizen, contracted with the Republic to bring in settlers to a large grant of land west of San Antonio. He was



Points of Interest for Castroville

1. See Chamber of Commerce
2. Amelia Castro Grave
3. Replica Castroville Home SCH
4. Ihnken House 1876 PCH
5. Illies House 1846 PCH
6. Ihnken House
7. Wagner House 1855 PCH
8. Joseph Wendel House 1847 PCH
9. White House
10. Mechler House PCH
11. Wantz House 1800s PCH
12. Wilford Wernette House
13. F. Xavier Schmidt House 1870 THM
14. Naegelin House 1848 PCH
26. Fachwerk House 1873 SCH
27. Pioneer Farm House SCH
28. Joseph Weber House PCH
29. Henry Kueck Homestead
30. Peter Pingenot House 1845 FCH
LOC SACSA
43. Charles Naegelin House 1872 PCH
44. Mangold-Holzhaus House 1855 PCH
80. Reppold House 1875 PCH
81. Harrold House 1860
87. Breiden House
88. Historic Structure PCH THM
89. Maverick House
90. Viewscape of Medina Valley
91. Flat Rock Crossing
92. Canal A

PCH = Pioneer Castroville House
 THM = Texas Historical Marker
 NHM = National Historical Marker
 SCH = Special Castroville Marker
 LOC = Library of Congress
 SACSA = San Antonio Special Conservation
 Society Award



Points of Interest for Historical Houston Square Area

15. St. Louis Catholic School 1924
16. St. Louis Catholic Church 1870
PC THM
17. 2nd Parish Rectory 1896
18. Moye Center 1870 PCH THM
19. 1st St. Louis Church 1840 PCH
THM
20. 1st Catholic School 1870 PCH
21. John Vollmer House
22. Phillip Wernette House
23. Nicholas Tondre House 1859 PCH
24. George Haass House PCH NHM
25. Haass Log Cabin 1851
31. Alfred Bourquin House PCH
SACSA
32. Joseph Carle House & Store 1867
PCH
33. Peter Jungman House & Store 1867
PCH
34. Haby/Jungman House
35. Joseph Huesser Saloon 1907
36. Claude Dubuis House 1847 PCH
THM
37. Jean Merian House 1851 PCH
NHM LOC
38. Joseph Bohl House
39. A.H. Tondre House
40. Louis Mangold House
41. Louis Huth House 1848 PCH
42. Joseph Burger House 1844 PCH
SACSA
45. Arcadius Steinle House 1847 PC
THM
46. Louis Ihnken House 1844 PCH
47. Tarde Hotel 1852 PCH
48. St. Louis Society Building
49. Joseph Courand Store 1860s
50. Joseph Courand House 1860s
51. Early Post Office 1917
52. Old Planing Mill
53. Lorentz Rihn House
54. Old Standby 1856 PCH SACSA
55. George Haass Store 1849 PCH
56. Zion Lutheran Church 1939
57. Blacksmith Shop 1920
58. A.E. Tondre House 1917 PCH
59. Andre Carle House 1853
60. Joseph Burell House 1857 SACSA
61. Michel Kauffmann House 1873
62. Cesar Monod House 1849 PCH
THM
63. John Vance House 1859 PCH
64. Grist Mill 1854
65. Historic Pecan Tree site
66. Julius Mueller House 1846 PCH
67. Henry Jean Rieden House 1848
68. Louis Haller House 1875 PCH
THM
69. Log Cabin
70. Hans Meat Market 1910
71. Henry Vonflie
72. 2nd County Courthouse 1879 PCH
THM
73. Kiefer/Wernette Brewery & Saloon
1870
74. Blasius Kiefer House 1870 PCH
75. Louis Burell Ranch Headquarters
House 1899 SCH
76. Castro Homestead PCH THM
77. Old Highway Filling Station 1926
78. September Square
79. Medina River Dam 1854
82. Monier House
83. Cordier-Tschirhart-Seal House 1847
PCH THM
84. Joseph Courand House 1882 PCH
85. Nicolas Haby House 1869 PCH
86. Brauer House PCH

Road to FM-471. The whole loop back to U.S. 90 is about 5 miles and well worth the time.

During Castroville's sesquicentennial celebration it was noted that one of the reasons Castroville is today recognized as one of "The 200 Most Quaint Villages" in the U. S. is that the community was by-passed by the railroad. In the following paragraphs, a local historian recounts the story.

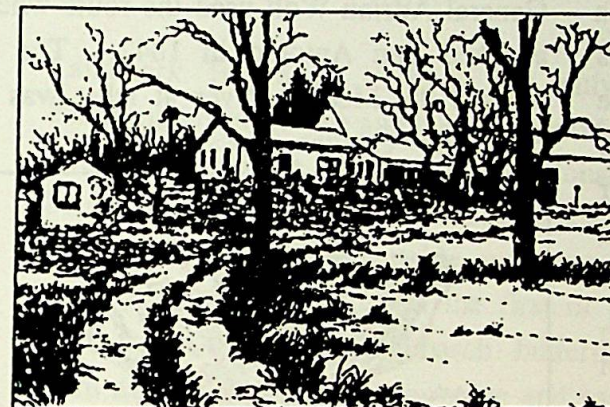


Figure 16 Medina Valley Greenhouse - Robert Quill Johnson

Castroville and the S.P.

The great Castroville railroad controversy had its genesis some years earlier and some miles to the east--about 60 miles east to be exact. When the railroad was building toward San Antonio, the route was laid out to pass quite near to Geronimo, a very small village a few miles north of Seguin. The people of Seguin had heard what happens to a town when it is by passed by the railroad, and they wanted no part of it. They could not see losing most of their business and population to a suburb like Geronimo. When direct negotiations

failed to bring results, they decided to apply some leverage.

At that time Seguin was represented in the Legislature by a very able lawyer named W.H. Burges. By using his very considerable powers of persuasion, and by calling in a few past favors, Burges pushed a bill through the Legislature to the effect that if a railroad is going to pass within five miles of a county seat, then it must pass within one mile. The most immediate effect was that it is a measured mile from the Guadalupe County Courthouse to the depot; Seguin continued to thrive and Geronimo only appears on the most detailed maps. When the railroad headed out of San Antonio toward the Pacific Ocean, the first county seat it approached was a place called Castroville. The S.P. asked for a \$10,000 donation to confer its blessings on the little town. The thrifty Alsatians were well aware of what had happened in Seguin; they told the S.P. that they didn't mind driving a mile to the depot, and they had better things to do with \$10,000.

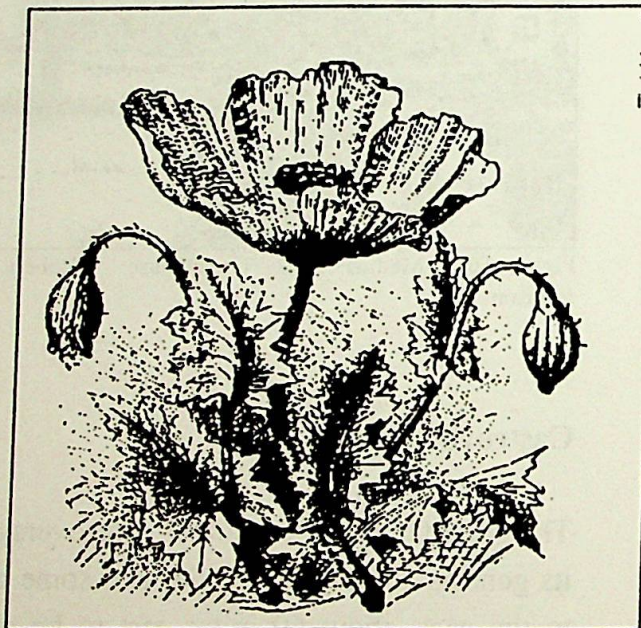
However, the railroad had learned a lesson, too. If you will look at a map, you will see that the most direct route from La Coste to Dunlay runs almost northwest and passes within a couple of miles of Castroville. The railroad track, however, makes an arc to the south through Pearson before swinging north to Dunlay. No part of the track is within 5 miles of the Castroville City Hall (then the County Courthouse), and the county seat was moved to Hondo. (Source: E.G. Burges)

second only to Stephen F. Austin, "The Father of Texas," in the number of colonists that he brought in. Most of his recruits came from the Rhine Valley, primarily from the French province of Alsace, and they moved onto their grant in September, 1844 and established the town of Castroville. The little triangular park on the highway near the bridge was their first campground; it is called September Square to commemorate the occasion.

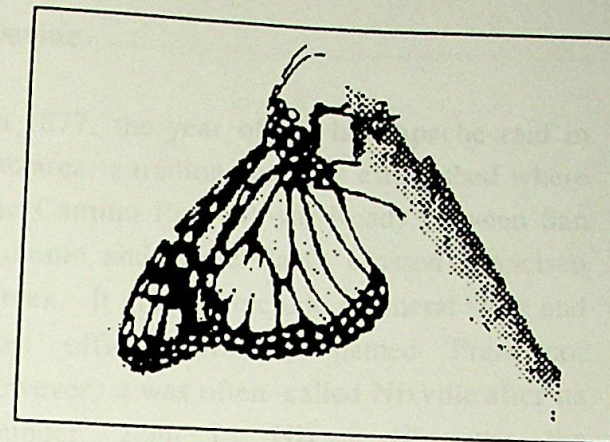
Each settler was given a city lot, as well as a tract of farm land, and soon their houses began to spring up in the new town. The architecture was distinctively European, especially the unsymmetrical roof line. Over 90 of those houses are still in use. No two are exactly alike, but all have thick walls of native limestone, hand-hewn cypress timbers, and all originally had shingle roofs, some of which have been covered over with tin. Many of the houses grew with the size and needs of the families, but most of the additions have been made in keeping with the style of the original structure. The entire old part of the city has been designated as a National Register District. Castroville was one of the first historic settlements between San Antonio and the Rio Grande, and the colonists had their problems with drought, disease and hostile Indians. They came to stay, however, and many of the names on the passenger lists of the ships that brought the colonists from Europe appear also in the current phone books. At one time Castroville was the tenth largest city in the state, and the county seat of Medina County. However, when the railroad deliberately bypassed the

town (an interesting story in itself) Castroville lost much of its incentive for growth, and the county seat was moved to Hondo. The original county courthouse now serves as the City Hall.

The Castroville neighborhood has one of the very few existing fragments of the ancient "Woll" road. The road was originally laid out by the Spanish to establish and support the short-lived missions in the Nueces Canyon to the west. It received its name when Mexican General Adrian Woll used the route when he attacked San Antonio in 1842. The road crossed the Medina River at what was then called the "Canyon Crossing."



Today you can travel a portion of this historic road and see a scenic portion of the Medina River by driving north from Highway 90 on Mexico Street. This leads you to the "Old River Road", designated as County Road 477. A mile or so out of town CR-477 crosses the Medina at the Canyon Crossing, now known as Flat Rock Crossing, and follows the Woll



Monarchs at Landmark Inn State Historical Park

Landmark Inn State Park is not only a charming historical site and bed and breakfast, but also one of the most accessible Monarch butterfly roosts in Texas. Thousands of butterflies are an unforgettable and dramatic sight. Every October, with the first of the cold fronts, migrating Monarch butterflies from as far north as Canada arrive and roost among the pecan and hackberry trees along the river and the mill stream. With a favorable north wind, the butterflies can travel as far as 400 miles a day. When the winds are not favorable for southerly migration, the butterflies remain near a protected roost. During the height of the roost, usually in mid October, butterflies congregate in the trees and nectar on nearby flowers. An amazing phenomena call "falling out"-- where the butterflies descend in small groups from a migrating altitude of 1000 feet-- can be seen near the Medina River Highway Bridge.

One of the more popular native nectaring plants for Monarchs, the Cow Pen Daisy, has been collected and reintroduced in open areas

in the park, along with other native and appropriate historical varieties of nectaring plants. Besides Monarchs, numerous tiger, giant and pipeline swallowtails, zebras, sulphurs and fritillaries are found nectaring on the park's many flowers. The best month to view butterflies is October.

According to biologist and butterfly expert Bill Calvert, butterflies do not appear to be disturbed by human admirers, and the park will be conducting tours and informal programs during October when the butterflies are in the park. Large Monarch roosts are also seen elsewhere along the Medina River during migration to overwintering.

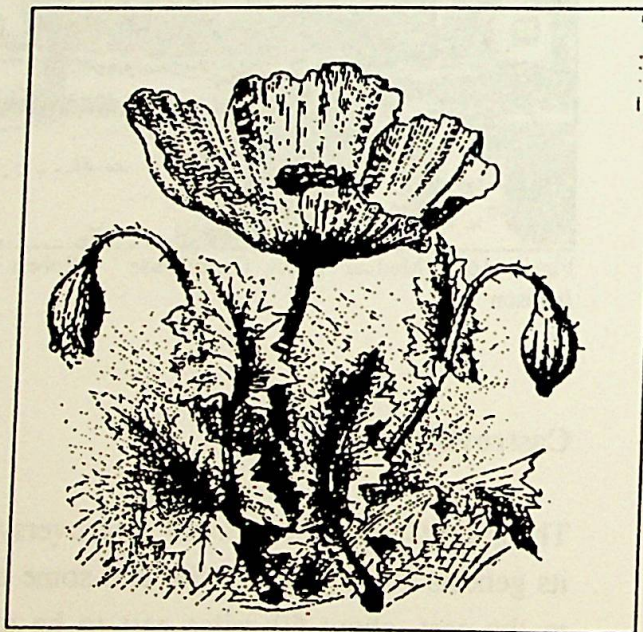
Because of the unpredictable nature of butterfly migration, call Landmark Inn for an update (210) 931-2133. Monarchs can be spotted flying over central Texas through binoculars. Spotters of migrating or roosting Monarchs should call the Monarch hotline 1-800-468-9719. (Source: J. Secrist at Landmark Inn State Historical Park)

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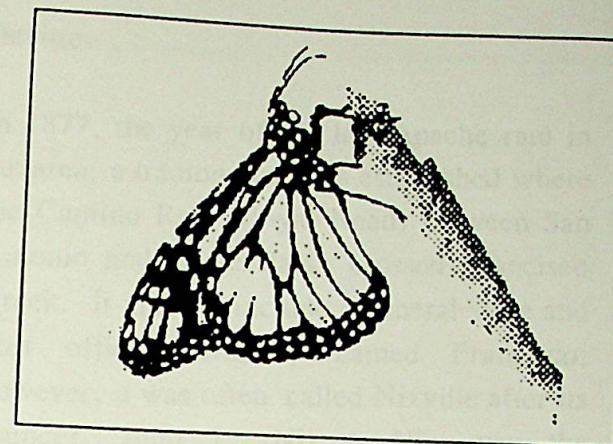
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Devine

In 1877, the year of the last Apache raid in the area, a trading post was established where the Camino Real (Royal Road) between San Antonio and Eagle Pass crossed Francisco Creek. It grew to include a general store and post office, officially named Francisco; however, it was often called Nixville after its founder, John L. Nix. Nix was the storekeeper, postmaster, and Justice of the Peace. In 1879, Robert Sweeten opened a grocery store at the settlement.

In 1881, the International & Great Northern Railroad line between San Antonio and Laredo was completed, and the company promptly established a stop 2 1/2 miles east of Francisco. Nix promptly moved his store and Post Office to the new town and became the first business in Devine.

The railroad named the town for Judge Thomas Jefferson Devine, a prominent attorney and regent of the University of Texas. He later served on the Texas Supreme Court and ran for Governor in 1878.

Today, Devine is a thriving community located on IH-35 ("the NAFTA highway") a mere 32 miles from downtown San Antonio. The railroad that goes from San Antonio to Laredo still runs through Devine just as it did when the city was founded, except now an average of 13 trains pass per day carrying millions of tons of cargo back and forth.

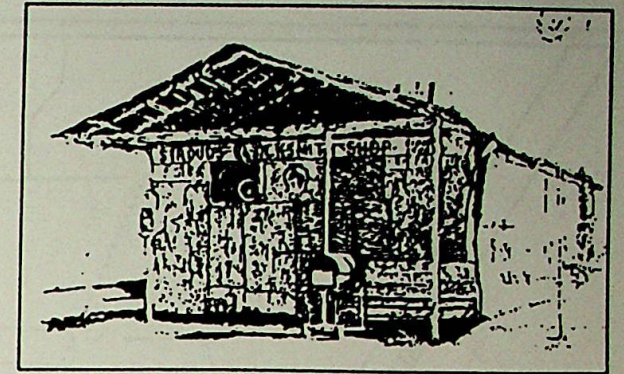


Figure 17 Stroud's Blacksmith Shop - Linda Alexander

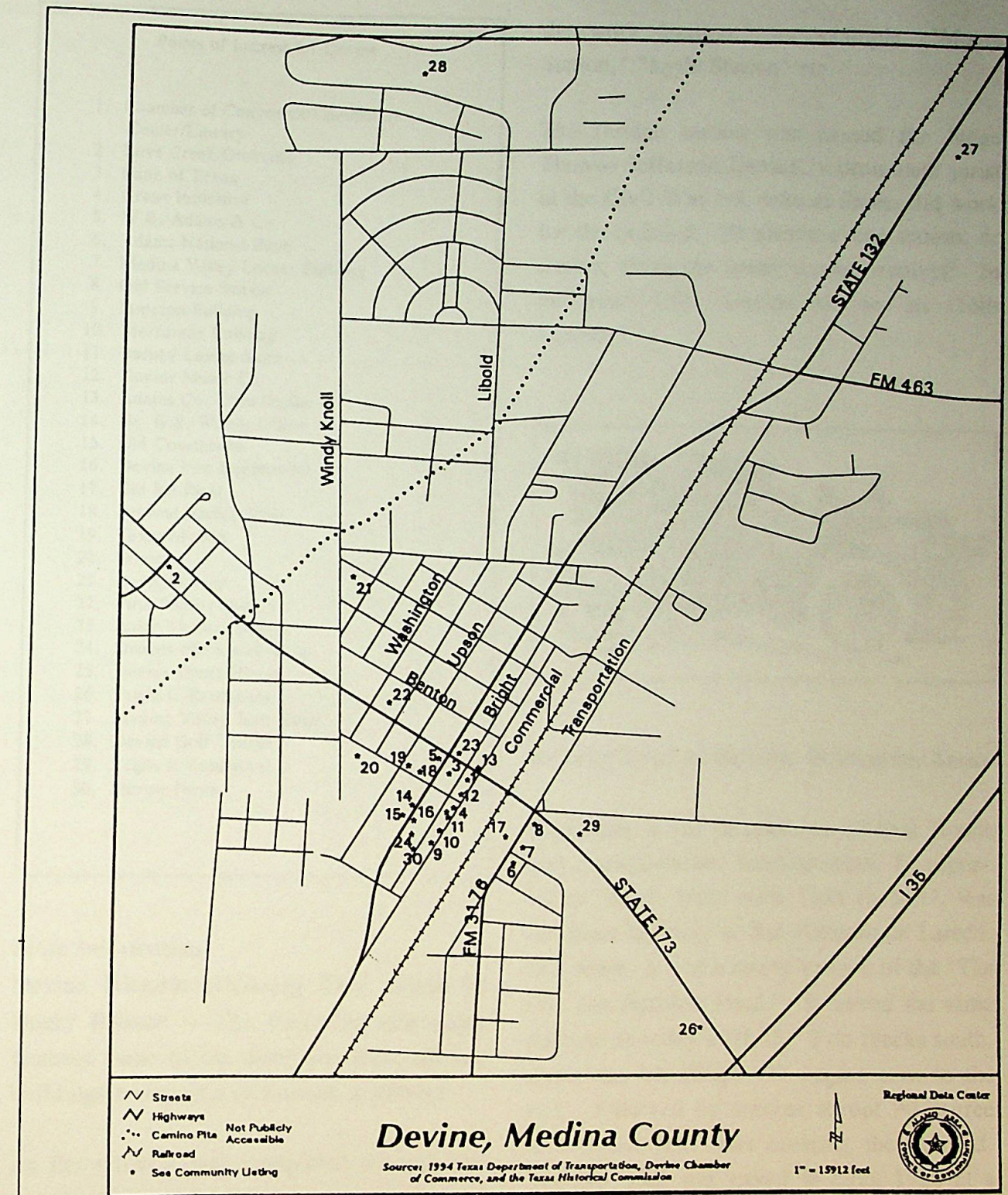
There are several Texas historical markers in Devine. One, in the center off the town, gives the life of Judge Devine. Another, a couple of blocks away, marks the Stroud Blacksmith Shop that was built in 1903 and was operated until quite recently by the son of the founder. Another is the Evergreen Cemetery, where the earliest graves are the victims of Indian attacks in the early 1870's. It also has the grave of Thomas Galbreath, one of the first and most active Texas Rangers and an early settler in the Devine area.

Other community attractions include a very fine 18-hole golf course, a "pick-your-own" experience during summer months at Love Creek Orchards, a display of Texas brands and a large mural of a historic area ranch at the Triple C Restaurant. The annual Fall Festival features a parade, carnival, food booths and a street dance as well as an array of local arts and crafts. It should be noted that artists from this area have won national and international recognition.

(Local information numbers: Chamber of Commerce 210- 663-2739; City Offices 210- 663-2804.)



In 1877, the year of the last census, the town of Devine was located where the Chicago and North Western Railroad crossed the Texas and Pacific Railroad. It was then called Devine, Texas. It was founded by John C. Devine, who was the first settler. The town was named after him. The first school was founded in 1878. The first church was founded in 1879. The first hotel was founded in 1880. The first newspaper was founded in 1881. The first bank was founded in 1882. The first cotton gin was founded in 1883. The first sawmill was founded in 1884. The first windmill was founded in 1885. The first oil well was founded in 1886. The first oil refinery was founded in 1887. The first oil pipeline was founded in 1888. The first oil terminal was founded in 1889. The first oil storage tank was founded in 1890. The first oil pumpjack was founded in 1891. The first oil derrick was founded in 1892. The first oil rig was founded in 1893. The first oil platform was founded in 1894. The first oil wellhead was founded in 1895. The first oil separator was founded in 1896. The first oil filter was founded in 1897. The first oil dehydrator was founded in 1898. The first oil stabilizer was founded in 1899. The first oil refinery was founded in 1900.



Points of Interest for Devine

1. Chamber of Commerce/Community Center/Library
2. Love Creek Orchards
3. Bank of Texas
4. Crane Insurance
5. W.B. Adams & Co.
6. Adams National Bank
7. Medina Valley Locker Building
8. Old Service Station
9. Jameson Building
10. Mercantile Building
11. Barney Levine Store
12. Devine Motor Co.
13. Adams Co. Corn Sheller
14. Dr. G.S. Woods Office
15. Old Courthouse
16. Devine Fire Department
17. Old Ice Plant
18. Penland Barber Shop
19. Texas Market
20. School
21. Devine Lodge
22. First Baptist Church
23. Judge Thomas Devine
24. Strouds Blacksmith Shop
25. Devine Opera House
26. Triple C Restaurant
27. Medina Valley State Bank
28. Devine Golf Course
29. Triple R Restaurant
30. Devine News

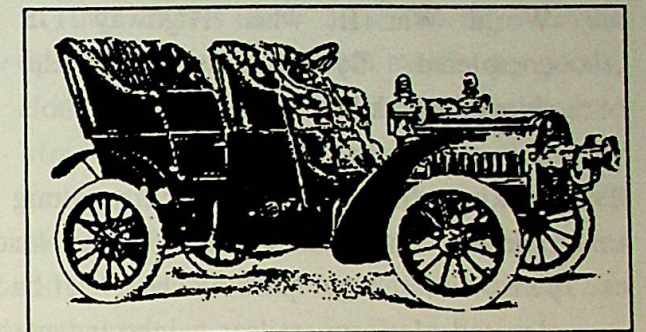
More information

Devine Historic (Driving) Tour Guide by Henry Briscoe -- The following tour guide features some of the older and more historic buildings and points of interest in Devine:

As the railroad was completed through this area in 1881, a depot was constructed every ten miles along the way to serve settlers along the route. The railroad gave each depot "station" a name. Briefly, the name included

the work "station," for example, "Moore Station," "Lytle Station" etc.

The Devine station was named for Judge Thomas Jefferson Devine, a prominent jurist in the Civil War era, who at times, did work for the railroad. At almost every station, or depot, along the route, a town evolved. In this year, 1997, Devine will see its 116th birthday!



Driving Tour of Historic Downtown Area:

Beginning at the intersection of East Hondo and Transportation, heading south. Transportation Street, from circa 1881 to 1937, was the main highway to San Antonio or Laredo. In a sense, it was a newer version of the "The Old San Antonio Road." It served the same purpose as today's IH-35! Two blocks south, there was an abrupt, 90 degree turn to the right, followed by another abrupt 90 degree turn to the left, after crossing the railroad. The old road was paved in circa 1920 at a width of approximately 18 feet.

Loading Pens--Located on the SE side of the railroad, exactly where Hondo Street is today, were the old railroad loading, or shipping

pens. When the railroad built a depot, they also built shipping pens so that the people could ship their cattle by railroad to market or to grass in Kansas and other locations. The old pens were quite large, covering probably a half acre or more and were constructed of heavy lumber. Leading to the railroad, at railcar height was a large "loading chute" built with a ramp so the cattle could be loaded, or unloaded.

The pens were removed about the time of World War II, when Highway 173 was completed. By that time, few cattle were shipped by rail in this area.

Packing Shed--Another facility along the railroad, immediately south of the loading pens, was a huge "packing shed." It had an elevated platform, railcar height and perhaps 150 feet long and 45 feet wide. It was open on all sides and completely covered with a roof. This facility was used to pack vegetables to include onions and roasting ears. It was also used as a facility to house bales of broom corn that was ready for shipment.

At one time, Devine had an onion grower, W.H. Melton, who claimed to be the world's largest "shipper of onions." And they were shipped out of this facility. New automobiles were also unloaded out of railcars by local dealers. The old facility was removed and replaced by a building now used for processing peanuts.

Old Service Station--Directly across Transportation is probably Devine's oldest building which was constructed to serve as a

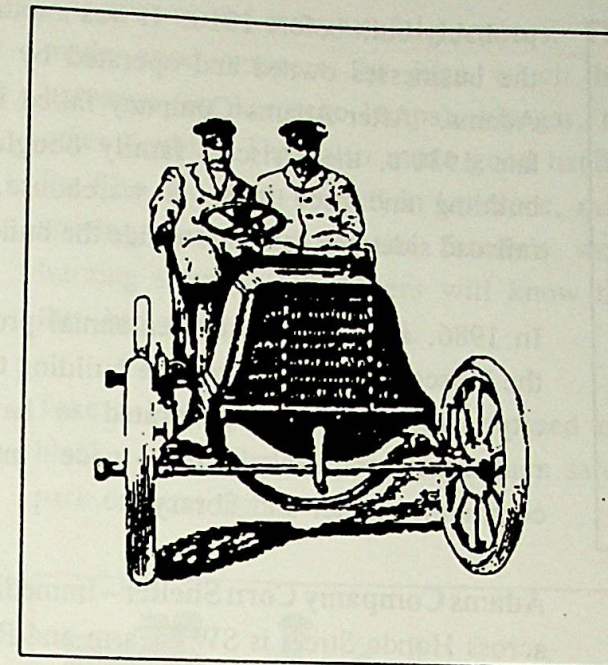
service station. It dates to a time before 1930. The "Tortilla Factory" produces 'take out' food in that building today.

Loggins and Lilly - The next building south of the old service station is the old Loggins and Lilly store building. On the front today is the "Medina Valley Locker Plant" sign, a business which closed in the late 1970's. Like many of the older buildings in Devine, this one was built near the first decade 1912 of this century. Please note the architecture of these older buildings. Most have a unique design, or art work near the top. This building, although almost one hundred years old, has no cracks!

Loggins and Lilly was a large department store, which sold almost anything including hardware, parts for machinery, firearms, clothes and also included a grocery. In the late 1930's Loggins and Lilly bought the large building now occupied by The Bank of Texas and moved to that location.

Adams National Bank and Adams Company On the SE corner of Hayden (next street to the east) and Transportation intersection, one finds the Old Adams National Bank, the first bank in Devine and one of a number of businesses begun by W.B. Adams. Joining the old bank building on the south was the first, Adams Company department store. These buildings were burned to the ground shortly after 1900 and were built back in place with slightly different architectures.

Old photos are available which show large crowds attending the dedication of these buildings.



Note the old live oak tree on the bank's north side. Under the branches of this tree in 1881, the First Baptist Church of Devine was organized. The tree also is shown in the dedication photos and appears to have changed little in almost 100 years.

Proceed south and make a right turn over the railroad on Herring Street. After crossing the railroad, pull safely off the street before Commercial while facing west.

Jameson Building - Across the street you will see the Devine Volunteer Fire Department. Located on that site, toward the east end, was the site of the old Jameson Store, one of the very first buildings in Devine. It was constructed of sandstone rock, native to this area and the walls were still standing in the 1930's.

The Mercantile--The building directly in front, more recently occupied by The

Mercantile, has served many masters back in history. Near the turn of the century, it was a drug store operated by the Whitfield family. Later it was a meat market and still much later, a pool hall. Probably it served other purposes as well.

Now turn right and proceed north up Commercial Street.

Levine's Store at 210 Commercial St.

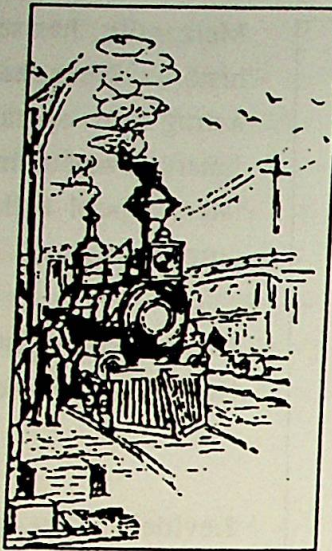
In the 1920's and 30's, Barney Levine operated this store and sold mostly dry goods, clothing, shoes etc. Later, he sold the store to Mrs. Berman and her son, Silas. Barney Levine was very friendly man and well thought of in the community. The Bermans did not live in Devine but commuted from San Antonio.

Briscoe Opera House at 206 Commercial St.

Note the architecture on these old buildings which were constructed in circa 1900. The Briscoe Opera House was built and operated by George T. Briscoe Sr., who owned and operated Devine's first lumber yard. The opera house hosted many productions from out of town as well as locally produced shows. It is a National Register Historic Building.

"Train Station" or Depot--As you proceed to the north along Commercial, there will be a metal tower on your right; between the street and the railroad. In this area was the old railroad depot. One could buy a ticket from the agent. The south end of the depot was the warehouse area with platform at railcar height for ease of loading. The depot

was probably some 75 to 80 feet north to south and perhaps 25 feet wide in the warehouse area. The rails were on both sides of the depot.



The depot building can be seen today on each end of a shopping area at the intersection of Teel and Park Streets.

200 Commercial--First State Bank now occupied by Crain Insurance. This building was constructed in circa 1907 and was used for the First State Bank. George Hester was the primary mover. Though the years the building has housed a bakery and grocery store.

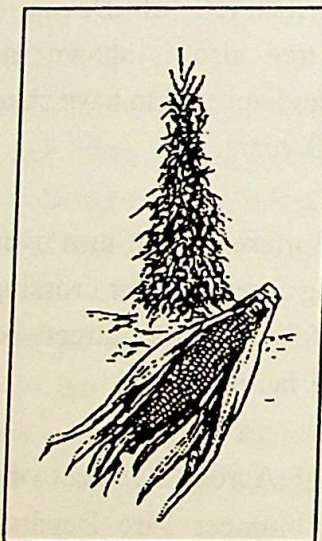
After crossing College, the first building on the left was rebuilt in the late 1940's, following a fire. In the 1920's, it served as home for Devine Motor Company. In the SE corner of the building was a drive-through service station and the rear part of the building served as a garage for the motor company. In later years this building was home to Schott's Model Market, a food and department store.

Adams Company Lumber Yard--The next building on your left is the old Adams Company Lumber Yard (See sign on building), now the Driscoll Library. The old lumber yard had a drive-through lane and was

probably built before 1910. It was another of the businesses owned and operated by W.B. Adams. After Adams Company failed in the late 1930's, the Driscoll family bought the building and used it for a warehouse. A railroad sidetrack came alongside the building.

In 1986, as a state Sesquicentennial project, the Driscoll family donated the building to the city and funds were generated to have it renovated, remodeled and made into a community center and library.

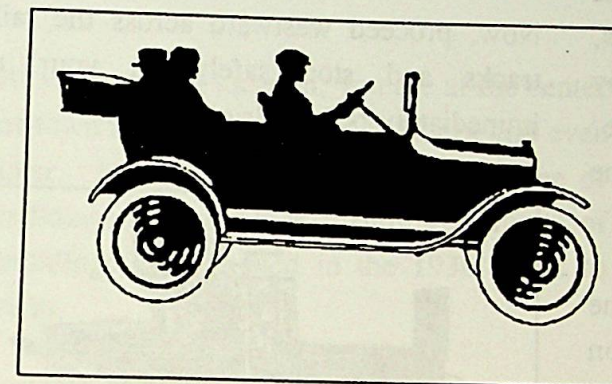
Adams Company Corn Sheller--Immediately across Hondo Street is SWT Farm and Ranch Supply, an agribusiness facility. Years ago, that was the Adams Company Corn Sheller.



In harvest times, one could see wagons loaded with corn lined up to the west for some four or five blocks, past where the Catholic Church is located. Wagons arriving from the east would be lined up on the SE side of the railroad tracks, down south along the tracks, for blocks. After unloading the handpicked earcorn, one could then back up to the "corncob chute" and take home a load of cobs and shucks. Cows ate the shucks and hogs could glean a few kernels of corn that may have remained on the cobs.

The cobs served many useful purposes. They made good stoppers for jugs which held kerosene (for kerosene lamps), vinegar, and other liquids. They also made good handles for files and when soaked in kerosene, made starting fires easy in the family's wood burning stoves. Old timers will know that they had other uses, as well.

Take a left turn on to Hondo, proceed one block and another left on Bright then safely park on your right.



Adams Company--"Everything From A Ratskin to a Ranch."--On your right is the Bank of Texas, originally, Adams Company and later, Loggins and Lilly. At the top of the building, printed all the way across the east and west sides in large letters were these words, "EVERYTHING FROM A RATSKIN TO A RANCH." And, the sign meant what it said!

The store had three floors; one a basement. It had a unique cashier arrangement in that there was a central cashier in the store's center. A clerk in one department would make a sale, put the money and receipt in a cup, attach the cup to an overhead cable

arrangement and with a tug, send the cup along the cable to the cashier. In a minute, the change and receipt would be returned. Both Adams Company and Loggins and Lilly used this system.

After Loggins and Lilly closed, Winns operated out of the building for a number of years and after Winns closed, the Bank of Texas began operations.

Cross College street going south and continue to a small, white building on your right. This building was, in the later years of his practice, the office of Dr. G.S. Woods, one of Devine's most honored and loved citizens. For years, he was the only doctor in Devine. He made house calls at all hours of the night and delivered hundreds of babies over the years; perhaps thousands.

The Courthouse--After Dr. Woods' office, the next building on the right, now owned by the Devine News, was the old "courthouse." It was the office of the local Justice of Peace. Out in back was a two-cell jail. The end building in the small chain of buildings is The Devine News, the oldest business in Devine. It has been in business and owned by the same family since 1898.

Devine Fire Department--On the left, in a white building with a "star" emblem at the top is the old Devine Fire Department building. In the 1920's and 30's, one could see the old "LaFrance" fire truck backed in there, ready to roll. It was the only fire truck in those times.

Make a right turn on Herring.

Stroud Blacksmith Shop--After the right turn, you will encounter Stroud Blacksmith Shop, also in business for almost 100 years. While still owned by the family, no family member works there today. For years, one could smell the coal smoke from the forge and hear all over town the mighty blows of Joe Stroud Sr. as he struck his great anvil. An old one cylinder, gasoline engine powered a series of large, wooden overhead pulleys which operated various tools to include triphammers and such. Wagon wheels, plowshares, horse shoes, brands and many other items were made and repaired there. Sherille Stroud continued operation of the Shop until his death in the 1980's.

Devine News--Behind Stroud's is the Devine News. Mr. W. L. Dubose began operation of the The Devine News in 1898. The newspaper is still owned by the Dubose family and is one of Devine's oldest businesses.

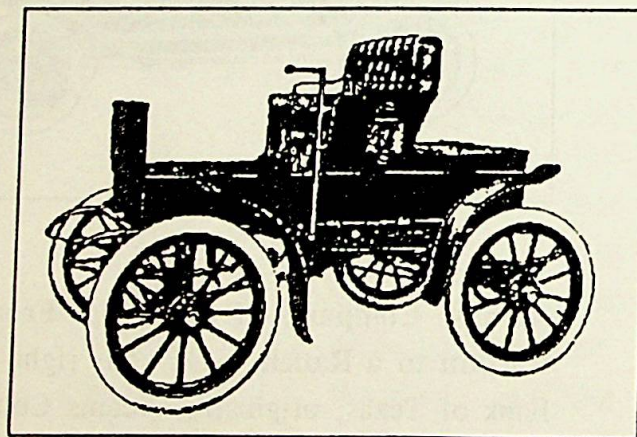
Now, please return to the intersection of Transportation and College (Medina Valley Locker Plant), face west and safely park before crossing the railroad.

Ice Plant--On your left is a building now occupied by Broadway Company. Closer to the railroad, where ice could be loaded/unloaded into cars, was the old "Ice Plant," a very important element of life in this community in earlier times. They sold ice in 12.5, 25, 50, 75 or 100 pound blocks. An attendant was usually on a platform on the outside, facing the street, ready to take

someone's order. A 25 pound block of ice would fit nicely down into the niche of the back bumper of a Model A Ford. Going home in a wagon, one usually wrapped the ice in a tarp or sack.

There was also a delivery, and all any household had to do was to put a preprinted card in the window showing at the top how many pounds of ice was wanted that day. And then, the delivery person would put the ice in the customer's icebox.

Now, proceed westward across the railroad tracks and stop safely on your right, immediately before Bright Street.



Majestic Theater--On your right is a vacant area with a concrete surface. That is the site of the old Majestic Theater, which was removed in circa 1980. The Majestic was a very important recreational facility for Devine in the days before TV. It had a small balcony and probably seated about 125 people. There were no "picture shows" in earlier times, on Sundays. Admission for a child in the thirties era was about ten cents.

Adams Company/Loggins and Lilly--The old stores fronted on College. There was an entrance in front, center and also another at the SE end(nearest). Also at the southeast end of the store (out of the cold wind in winter etc.) was Devine's labor market. Anyone who wanted "hands" to work, simply drove up to that point and the workers would come running. The going rate for farm labor was about ten cents an hour in the 1930's. In those depression times, people had no problem working ten hours a day in the field for a dollar.

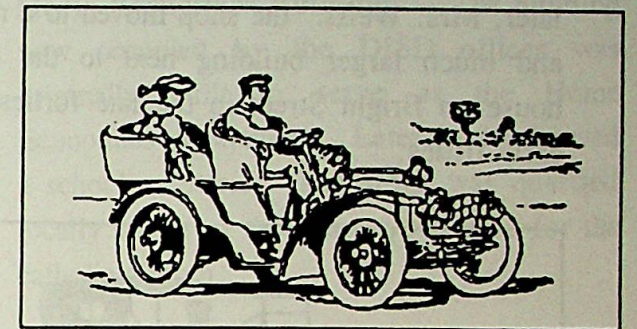
At your present location, you are at the center of town as it existed in the 1930 era and even later. Now, look to your left at the line of buildings in that block. Here's a lineup of buildings as it existed in the 1930's--left to right.

Cozy Corner--The first building was then occupied by the Cozy Corner, a coffee shop and cafe where many of the local citizens met to socialize. Parked in the first slot was the cream colored, 1937 Chevrolet sedan of "Biggie" Hester, local trader in cattle, hogs, horses and other items. Recently a utility pole has been replaced there. The old pole had smooth wire wrapped around it from ground level up to some eight feet or so. The purpose of that wire was to prevent the traders from whittling the post in two, while trading and discussing politics.

Around the corner, facing south and parked parallel with the street, under a giant Cottonwood tree, was the black, 1938 Ford, one-ton pickup truck of Temple Adams (son

of entrepreneur W.B. Adams of Adams Company) and his partner, Pete Gardner, cattle traders.

This building, now used for radio station offices, served as a butcher shop in earlier times.



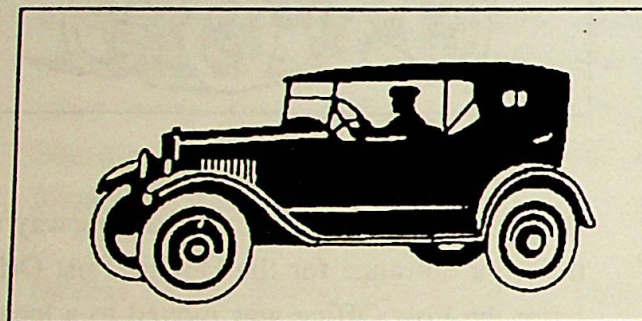
Devine Post Office--the arched doorway was the front entrance for the Devine Post Office. Later the Post Office was moved to a location on Teel Street and eventually to its present location on West College.

Penland Barber Shop--Next door to the Post Office was a Barber Shop operated by Mr. Penland and his son, Jud. This too, was a meeting place for men to trade and discuss politics and other matters. In a room behind the barber shop was a dining table where some older men played dominoes. On display for years, hanging on the wall were two antique pistols, one with four barrels and the other a cap and ball revolver.

Texas Market--Next to the Barber Shop was a grocery owned by George Thompson and his partner in earlier times Arturo Gutierrez. George was also one of Devine's noted athletes, lettering in football, basketball,

baseball and track at Southwest Texas State. He was interested in ranching and his partner, Arturo owned property and a slaughterhouse, east of Devine.

City Tailor Shop--Next was Devine's only "dry cleaner," The City Tailor Shop, owned and operated in the 1930's by Mrs. Newcomb, later, Mrs. Weiss. the shop moved to a new and much larger building next to the fire house on Bright Street in the late forties or early fifties.



Howard Drug Store (downstairs), Dr. G.S. Woods Office (upstairs)--For years the Howard Drug Store, owned by Mr. David Howard, was in operation at this location. Of interest to the youth of this community was the soda fountain where ice cream and soft drinks were sold. Later, in the early 1940's, the Drug Store was moved to a larger and new location on Teel Street.

Dr. G.S. Woods, for years, was the only medical doctor in Devine. During the depression years, he often was paid with eggs and other produce for his services. Many persons of this community who are now senior citizens, were "brought into the world" by Dr.

Woods, who was one of the community's most respected citizens.

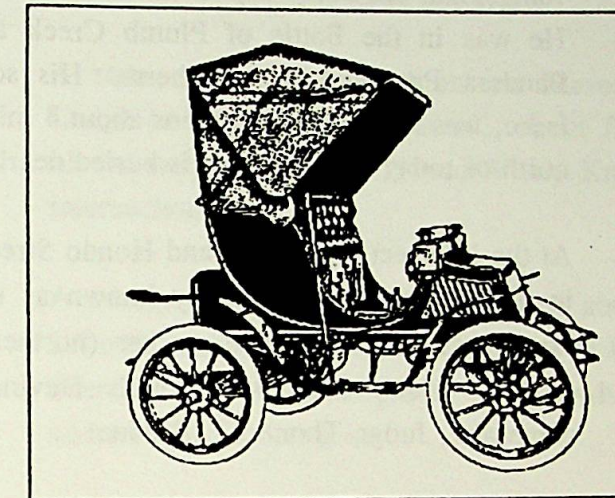
Please drive west across Teel Street and safely park parallel on the first available curbside space.

Rose Lodge Hotel - On your left is the parking lot of Conoly Drug. On this site was the old Rose Lodge Hotel, owned by the Whitfield family. It faced north, on College. In earlier times, another two story building was to the immediate west and it served as the whitfield home. In the 1930's and before, this was the only building(s) on this lot. In 1937, Highway 81 (now 132) was diverted from what is now Transportation Drive, along the railroad, to Teel Street. At that time, the Rose Lodge was moved to the west, about where the Post Office is located today. Later, it was removed and the Post Office constructed.

Morris Home -- Looking to your right, at the end of the block there is a small building. At the site of that building was the old Morris home which is shown in some of the earlier photos taken of Devine. In the 1930's era, it was the only building on this block. Out in the center of the block in those times, there were a set of pens where people tied up their horses and parked their wagons when they came to town to shop on Saturday afternoon. Large mesquites provided shade.

Now, proceed to the west, cross the next street and stop along the curb. On your left is the site of one of Devine's earliest schools. A frame school house shows on this site in

photos taken in the 1900 era. In that time period, a new, two story brick building was constructed and stood near the center of the school building you see standing today. It was later torn down but part of the old building was incorporated in the new.



From the early 1900's until mid-century, Devine area youngsters entered the first grade at the east end of this building and graduated from high school in the west end. The auditorium on your left was the entertainment center for the community and also where the graduation exercises were held. The building now belongs to the VFW. At times during World War II, the entire area in front of the building was piled high with metal which students brought from home to help with the war effort.

While many highly successful persons completed school in this building, it is also interesting to note the ingenuity some students displayed. In the 1930's, on halloween night,

some of the boys placed a donkey on top of the auditorium! On another spooky night, they placed a cow in the school house.

Proceed down to the Hurley Funeral home and park curbside. Immediately before the funeral home is small, stone building.

Home Economics Building -- The building now occupied by the DISD offices was originally built to serve as the Home Economics department. Later it also housed a school cafeteria. The stone was quarried locally and is of the same typed used for the catholic church.

First Baptist Church -- The Hurley Funeral Home bought the old First Baptist Church when a new building was constructed one block south to the north on Hondo St.

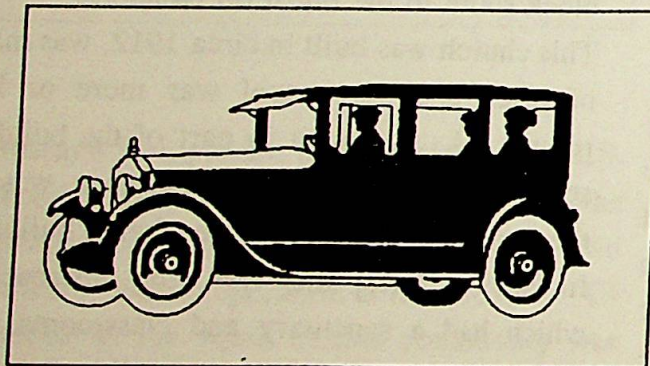
This church was built in circa 1912, was made of brick and the chapel was more or less rotund. A basement in part of the building served as classrooms etc. Next door, west of the main building is a large, frame building. In earlier times, this was "the tabernacle," which had a sanctuary and classrooms. In summertime, with no air conditioning, the church family held services in the tabernacle, which had large, wooden shutters which opened upwards. This shutter arrangement permitted summer breezes to flow through the sanctuary which was more comfortable for the congregation.

Now proceed westward, turn right on Windy Knoll, turn right on Hondo, proceeding eastbound and take another right on Jefferson

then proceed into the parking lot for the Catholic Church.

St. Joseph's Catholic Church -- Located here is certainly one of the more beautiful buildings in Southwest Texas. Note that the architecture is similar to that of many of the much older Catholic churches and even the ancient missions in this part of the state. The building was completed in 1922. In earlier times, the bell was rung through use of a long rope which extended to floor height. The old bells could be heard for two miles or more. Today the bells still ring but are electronic. On the west side of Jefferson Street is the Rectory, built in 1906.

This completes the tour.



Historical Markers and Other Points of Interest:

Evergreen Cemetery--On the south side of the cemetery is a state historical marker. In the cemetery along Indian street is another small marker identifying the grave of Joe Wilton, last settler killed by Indians in Medina County (April 22, 1877). Nearby are markers of others killed by Indians to include Whitley, McRae and Galbreath. Also near is the grave

of famed Indian Fighter and Texas Ranger, Tom Galbreath.

Brief Biography of Tom Galbreath - Buried in Devine's Evergreen Cemetery is famed Indian Fighter and Texas Ranger, Tom Galbreath. He was with Jack Hays' Texas Rangers in the early days of Texas History. He was in the Battle of Plumb Creek and Bandera Pass and many others. His son, Isacc, was killed by the Indians about 4 miles north of today's Devine and is buried nearby.

At the intersection of Teel and Hondo Streets in downtown Devine (locally known as the "four corners") is a state marker (northeast corner) which has to do with Devine's namesake, Judge Thomas J. Devine.

Brief Biography of Devine - Born in Nova Scotia in 1829, Devine came to Texas in 1843. He became a District Judge in 1851 and was very active in Confederate affairs during the Civil War. He was a member of the Public Safety committee of the Secession Convention; he was on the commission that took possession of Federal property in Texas; he was one of two Confederate judges in Texas, and was appointed to settle disputes among foreign merchants trading in cotton across the Mexican border. At the war's end, he was one of the Southerners who went to Mexico with the idea of continuing the struggle. He was indicted for treason, but was pardoned by President Andrew Johnson. He later served on the Texas Supreme Court and the Board of Regents of the University of Texas.

On the southwest corner, there is a county historical marker which tells about the death of Joe Wilton, last settler in Medina County to be killed by the Indians.

One half block east of the Herring/Teel intersection is the Stroud Blacksmith Shop, which has a state historical marker.

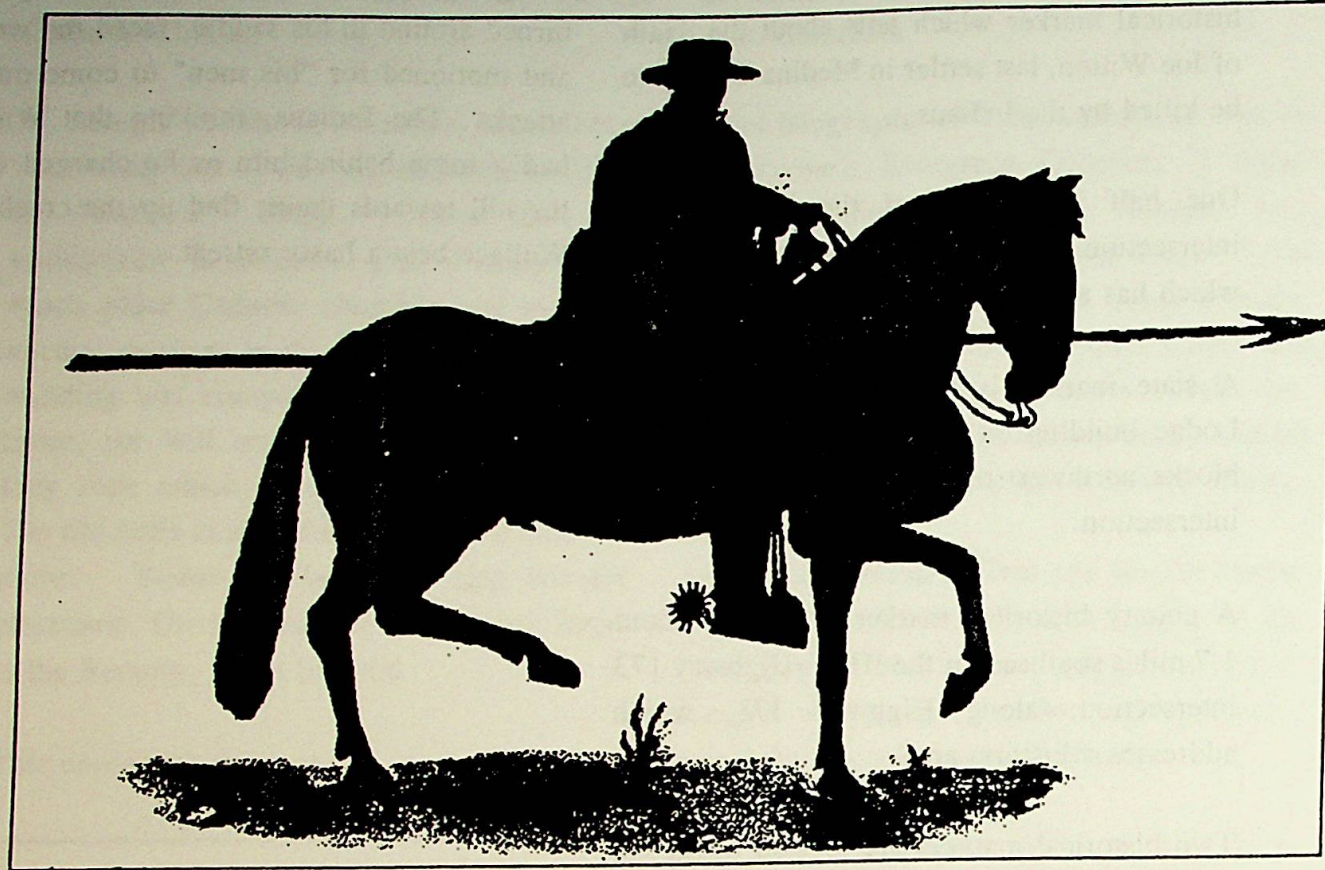
A state marker is located on the Masonic Lodge building on Windy Knoll, about five blocks northwest of the Hondo/Windy Knoll intersection.

A county historical marker is located about 1.7 miles southeast of the IH-35/Highway 173 intersection, along Highway 173, which addresses a historic area.

Two historical markers are located about 1.5 miles west of Devine High School, across Francisco Creek, on Highway 173. One is a county marker which tells about the Pita Camping Place on the old Pita Road (1716-1755) and the state marker tells about the first Spanish Expeditions through this area.

"Lookout Hill" or "Morris Hill" --About 1.7 miles west of Devine, across Francisco Creek is a high hill known in much earlier times as "Lookout Hill" and later as "Morris Hill." Old timers told the story of Bigfoot Wallace coming from the west, up to the top of that hill and when reaching the top, saw a band of Indians headed up Francisco Creek, down below. The Indians also caught sight of Wallace at about the same time, since there was no brush in this area at those times.

Being far outnumbered, Wallace quickly turned around in his saddle, faced the west and motioned for "his men" to come on and attack. The Indians, thinking that Wallace had a force behind him as he charged down the hill towards them, fled up the creek and Wallace beat a hasty retreat.



Old Trails and Roads in Devine Area -

The earliest Spanish expeditions into what is now Texas, passed almost through where Devine is now located, beginning with the De Leon Expedition in 1689. By 1716, the Pita Road was established by Domingo Ramon and named for the favorite camping spot along the way, Charco de la Pita or, the Pita Camping Place. Around April 1, 1721, had someone been standing on top of the high hill, located some 1.7 miles west of Devine, he or she could have looked to the east and seen the expedition of the Marquis of San Miquel de Aguayo pass by with some 4,000 horses, 8000 mules, 900 sheep and 600 cattle! The Pita Road remained the primary route until circa 1755 when the Comanche presence in north central, west Texas enabled them to attack

travelers along the old road. At that time a detour far to east was established and known as "The Lower Presidio Road." It remained in use until circa 1807, when the Spaniards established a small military force in the San Antonio area and opened a new, more direct route from San Antonio to the Presidio (located 25 miles down the Rio Grande and 5 miles across the river) which was known as "The Upper Presidio Road," the route used by Santa Anna on his way to the Alamo. It remained in use until the railroad was built in 1881 and a highway established alongside. (Source: Henry Briscoe)

La Coste

The town of La Coste is situated on land that was originally the part of the 18th century cattle range of the San Jose Mission known as Rancho San Lucas. El Camino Real crossed the Medina River close to the site of the town and General Santa Anna camped near here on his way to the Alamo in 1836, also forging the Medina River nearby. In 1881 the G. H. & S. A. Railroad was extending its tracks westward from San Antonio into Medina Co., and according to local sources, on October 23, 1881 the railroad station at this location was christened "LaCoste", probably after an affluent San Antonio businessman, Col. Jean B. La Coste. Eventually the farmers from the local areas combined with workers from the railroad support system and other enterprising businessmen to establish the Alsatian, Mexican and "Amerikaner" population of the town that grew around the station and became known by the same name.

La Coste quickly became the main railroad shipping point for eastern Medina and western Bexar counties, replacing wagon trains as the chief source of transporting supplies and produce. Traveling salesmen often came to town by train, lodged overnight in a local hotel, and peddled their wares by rented buggy. The first recorded sale of a town lot is listed in the Medina County Deed Records as that of a sale to F. Kilhorn on December 7, 1888, from the Southern Development Co. Although lot sales were slow at first, gradually there emerged a busy frontier railroad town. An editorial appearing in 1915 in the La Coste Ledger lists the businesses in

town as "three saloons, one bottling establishment, one soda fountain,...three big stores and about a half dozen small one, two lumber yards, a Farmer's Union Warehouse, two cotton gins, one national bank, a drug store, a butcher shop, a pool hall,...one hotel, a couple of restaurants,...two big schools and some small ones, one church, some hardware and implement dealers, one auto garage, a few of those auto agents, a few medicine vendors,...and last but not least a weekly newspaper."

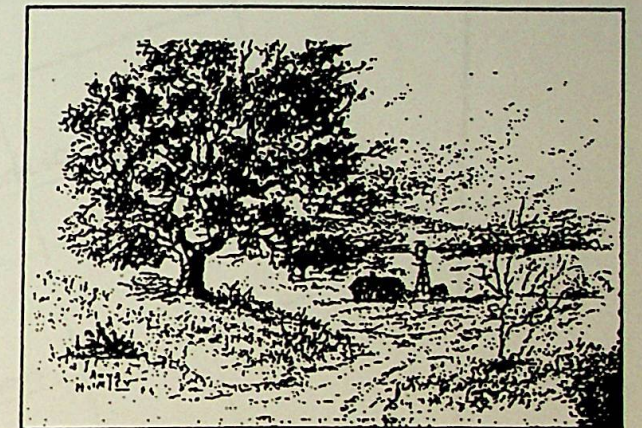
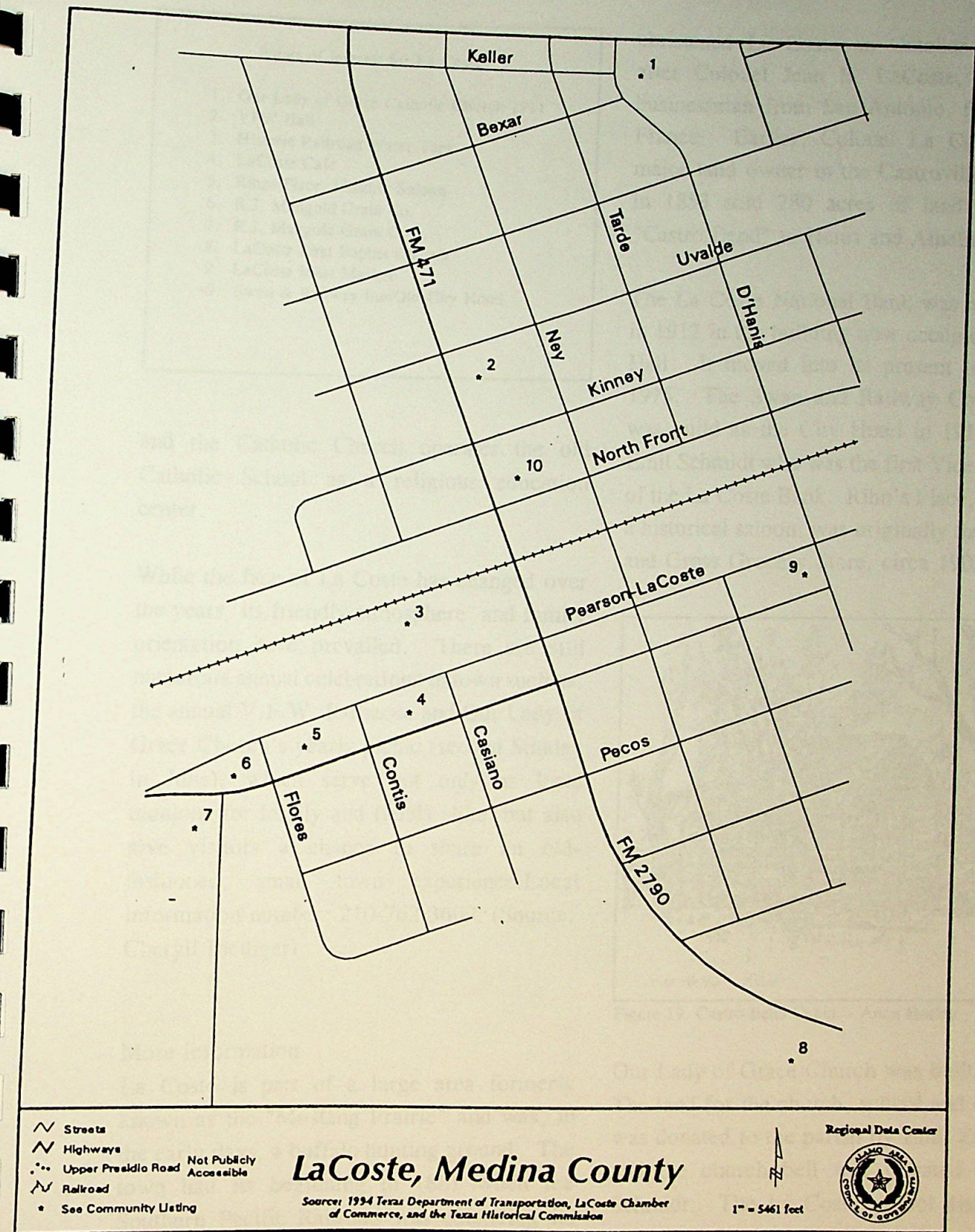
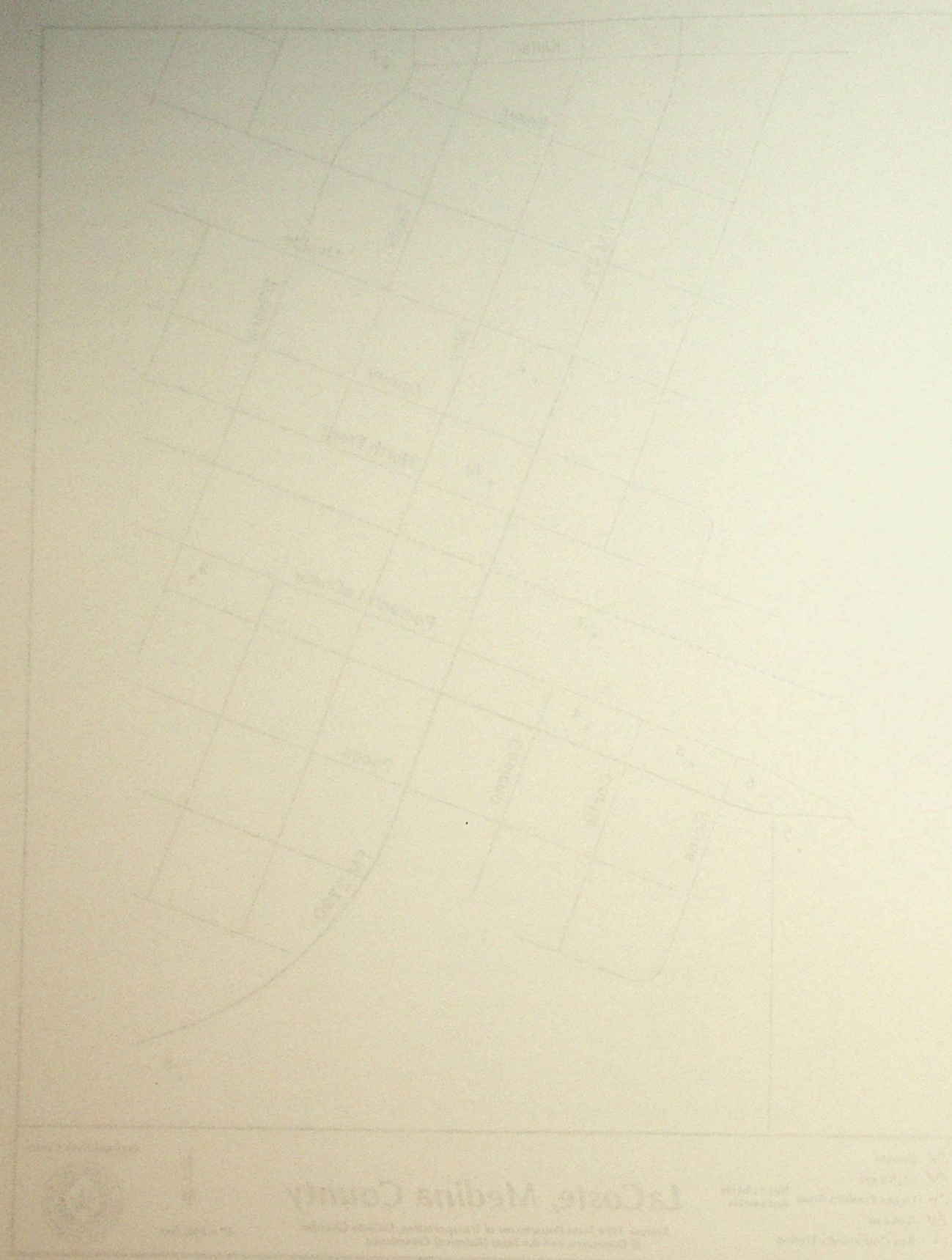


Figure 18 LaCoste Rural Farmstead - Anna Hurley

Today most of these businesses are gone, but the area continues to retain its strong agricultural and railroad identity. One of the old hotels remains as The Swan and Railway Bed & Breakfast, and the La Coste National Bank is still one of the major facilities in the county. The *La Coste Ledger* continues to operate as a print shop, and there are still saloons open reminiscent of the old ones. The La Coste Public School District consolidated in 1960 with the Castroville district to form the Medina Valley I.S.D.,





Points of Interest for La Coste

1. Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church 1911
2. VFW Hall
3. Historic Railroad Water Tank
4. LaCoste Cafe
5. Rihns Place. Historic Saloon
6. R.J. Mangold Grain Co.
7. R.J. Mangold Grain Co.
8. LaCoste First Baptist Church
9. LaCoste Meat Market
10. Swan & Railway Inn/Old City Hotel

and the Catholic Church operates the old Catholic School as a religious education center.

While the face of La Coste has changed over the years, its friendly atmosphere and family orientation have prevailed. There are still numerous annual celebrations in town such as, the annual V.F.W. Barbecue and Our Lady of Grace Church's yearly picnic (second Sunday in June), which serve not only as local reunions for family and fiends alike, but also give visitors a chance to share an old-fashioned, small town experience. Local information number: 210-762-3609. (Source: Cheryll Biediger)

More information

La Coste is part of a large area formerly known as the "Mustang Prairie" and was, in the early days, a buffalo hunting ground. The town had its beginning in 1881 when the Southern Pacific Railroad was extending its tracks westward from San Antonio. According to official records, the town was

christened La Coste on October 23, 1881, after Colonel Jean B. LaCoste, a wealthy businessman from San Antonio, formerly of France. Earlier, Colonel La Coste was a major land owner in the Castroville area and in 1853 sold 280 acres of land known as "Castro Bend" to Henri and Amelia Castro.

The La Coste National Bank was established in 1912 in the building now occupied by City Hall. It moved into its present location in 1975. The Swan and Railway Country Inn was build as the City Hotel in 1912 by Mr. Emil Schmidt who was the first Vice President of the La Coste Bank. Rihn's Place, presently a historical saloon, was originally the Schimdt and Gross Grocery Store, circa 1908.

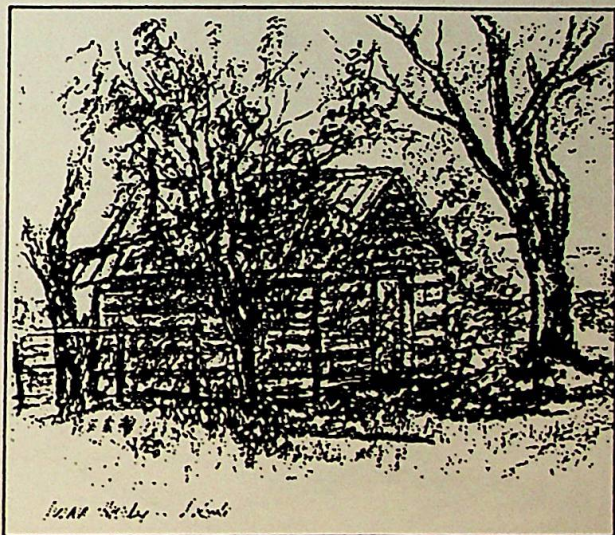


Figure 19 Castro Bend Cabin - Anna Hurley

Our Lady of Grace Church was built in 1911. The land for the church, school and cemetery was donated to the parish by Emil Zinsmeyer and the church bell was donated by Emil Schmidt. The La Coste school district was organized by order of the Commissioners Court on May 13, 1889. The first public school building in La Coste was a temporary

The first public school building in La Coste was a temporary structure on North Front Street across the street north of where the railroad depot stood, near the present water tower. In 1900, a building was erected on the La Coste school property, now the La Coste Elementary School. Surrounded by beautiful farmlands and fields, La Coste is rich in vegetation, grains, cattle raising and pecan orchards.

Lytle

The community of Lytle has a very fortuitous location in times of drought. They can draw water from more than one aquifer - the Edwards and Carrizo - Wilcox. Lytle falls within three counties: Atascosa, Bexar and Medina. The Coal Mine section on State Highway 132 is in Medina County. The Camino Pita cuts through this area. For more information on Lytle, please see listing under Camino Real Communities of Atascosa County.

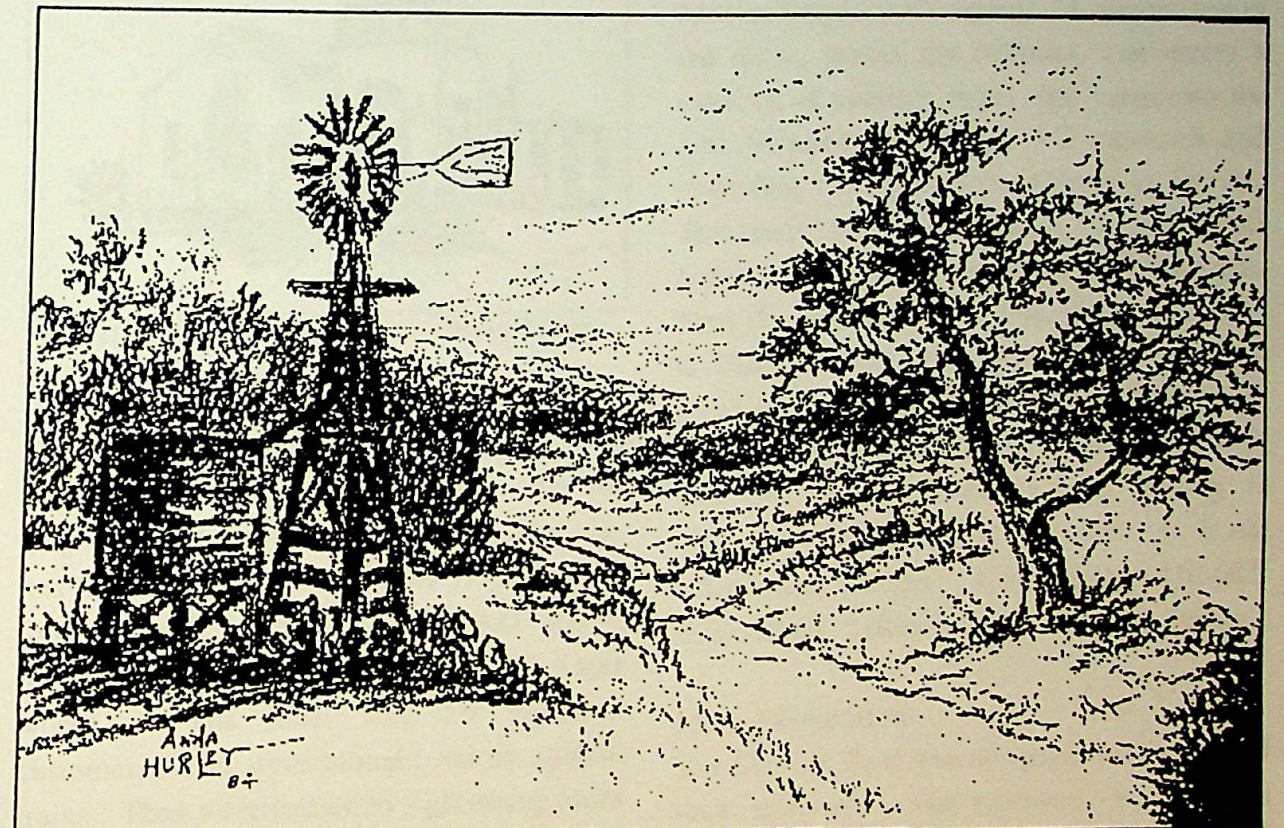


Figure 20 Windmill - Anna Hurley

Natalia

The town of Natalia was a creation of the Medina Irrigation Company, a British holding company, which named it for Miss Natalie Pearson, daughter of Dr. Fred Pearson who designed, promoted and built Medina Dam and the associated irrigation district. The misspelling was never corrected in the Post Office Records.

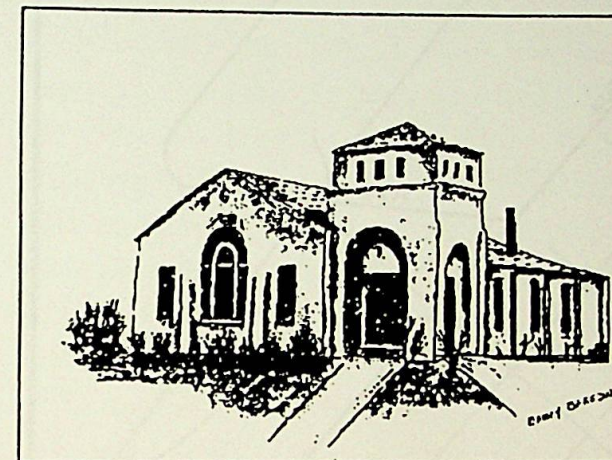


Figure 21 Natalia Community Church - Nancy Barrow

Natalia was established on the railroad as a headquarters for promotion and sale of irrigated farm land. Farms and Natalia city lots first went on sale in August 1912, and the town already had "...a \$40,000 hotel, macadamized streets, electric lights and water works." The hotel was for potential customers, who were brought out by special trains. They were treated to sightseeing tours of San Antonio and Laredo before coming to Natalia, where there was more lavish entertainment and high pressure salesmanship. The farms were well suited to vegetable production, and for 20 years there was a major cannery in Natalia that employed up to

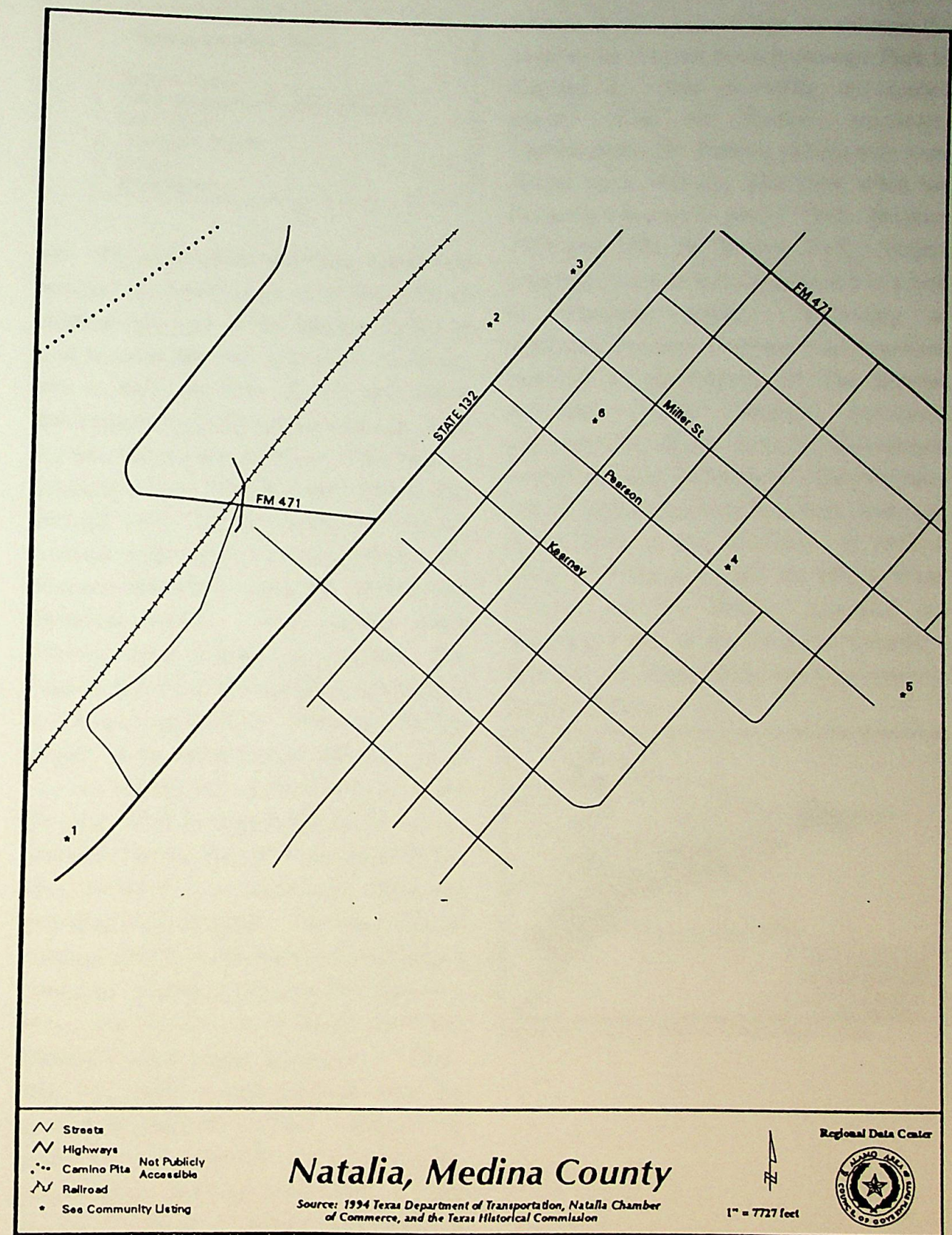
500 workers. It has more recently been converted to a factory for carpet padding.

Medina Irrigation Company fell on hard times during World War I, especially after the death of Dr. and Mrs. Pearson, and it underwent several receiverships and reorganizations. Since 1925, it has operated as the Bexar-Medina-Atascosa Counties Water Improvement District No. 1 - "BMA" for short. Its headquarters is still in Natalia.

The hotel burned in 1938 and was not rebuilt, so not much remains in Natalia itself of the Medina Irrigation Company. However, just to the north, across the railroad, one enters a network of country roads that crisscross the area between the SP and MP railroads and extending from Macdona almost to Devine. The roads serve the hundreds of small farms and rural homesteads, each served by a canal. Near the inter-section of FM 471 and FM 463 is Chacon Lake, the terminus of the long canal leading down from Medina Lake; it is the distribution point where the water shunted into the various feeder canals leading to different areas of the system. (Local information number: City Offices 210-663-2926; BMA 210-665-2132 - Ask for Evelyn.)

More information

The Medina Dam was designed with a natural rock spillway. The spillway, which is at elevation 1072 mean sea level (MSL) is 12 feet lower than the crest of the Dam at 1084



Points of Interest for Natalia

1. Griggs Cannery
2. Hotel - Private/Not Publicly Accessible
3. BMA Office
4. Community Church
5. Schools
6. Public Square

msl. The construction of Medina Lake made possible the development of 34,000 acres of irrigated farmland in the Medina Valley in what is today the BMA District. However, that is only one-fifth of the real estate development originally envisioned by Dr. Fred Pearson, the original promoter of the Medina Irrigation Project. Dr. Pearson's master plan included over 150,000 acres of irrigated farmland supplied by a series of storage and diversion reservoirs along the Medina and Guadalupe rivers. With private funds obtained from friends in England, Dr. Pearson, undertook the first phase of his grand land development project. Fortunately for the farmers of the BMA District that first phase was the construction of Medina Lake under the name of the Medina Irrigation Company. When the Medina Dam was completed in late 1912, the lake did not immediately fill up and land sales were sluggish. The result was an impaired cash flow for the Medina Irrigation Company. Further frustrating Dr. Pearson's efforts was the outbreak of World War I and England's involvement beginning in 1914. The war made communication with his investors in England difficult. Without the availability of additional capital to keep the project going until land sales picked up, the Medina Irrigation Company was placed in receivership in Federal Court. In what

became a last hope effort to salvage the project, Dr. Pearson booked passage back to England to solicit personally the needed capital from his English investors. Unfortunately, Dr. Pearson and his wife were among those who lost their lives when the *Lusitania* was sunk on May 7, 1915. Between 1915 and 1925 the Medina Valley Project remained, more or less dormant due to a lack of investment capital. Following an agreement between European and American investors in the Project, the San Antonio Suburban Farms Company purchased approximately 40,000 acres of undeveloped land at a cost of \$10 million. The two lakes and the irrigation system remained, however, in the hands of the receivers. In 1925, a group of farmers formed the BMA Water District, and the District purchased the remaining assets of the Irrigation Company, including the Medina Lake and canal system. (Source: BMA)

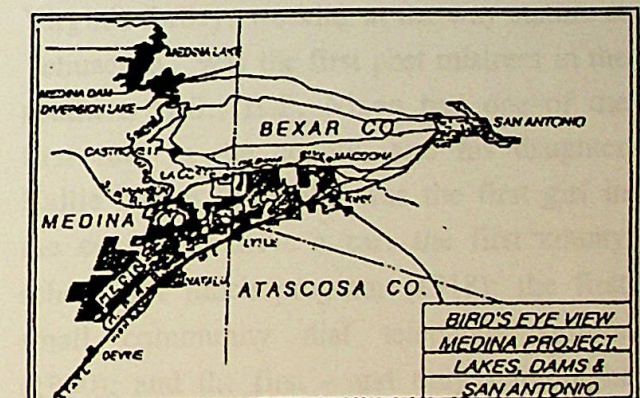


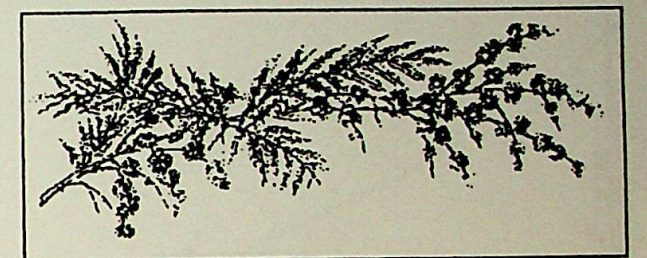
Figure 22 Medina Project Canal System - BMA

Yancy

Present-day Yancey has evolved from several earlier settlements in the area. The first was established about 1870 a few miles to the south, where El Camino Real crossed Tehuacana Creek in northern Frio County; it was known as Tehuacana. A single building served as both Methodist Church and school in the early days. Some time in the 1880's the two were moved to separate buildings built about two miles south of Yancy on land given by the Wilson family. The second community was started in 1885 when three families from Quihi / New Fountain bought land a few miles north of Yancey. In 1887 a third group bought land from the Stiles family west of Yancey and started a Baptist Church and school.

The three groups gravitated to their common center, and by 1898 the area was ready for a post office. The land had originally been owned by the Strait and Kilgore families, and Kilgore was the first choice for a name; however, it was already taken by a town in East Texas. Since both families had sons named Yancey that became the name of the town. Mail was carried to and from Hondo on horseback and by hack in the early years, and the post office housed in various stores until the present building was built in 1964-65. In the early 1900's cotton was the money crop, and Yancey had a gin, a drug store and doctor's office, Masonic lodge, barber shop, blacksmith and meat market. In 1913 the schools at Stiles Community and Tehuacana closed and formed the Yancey Consolidated School District; they were joined in 1928 by

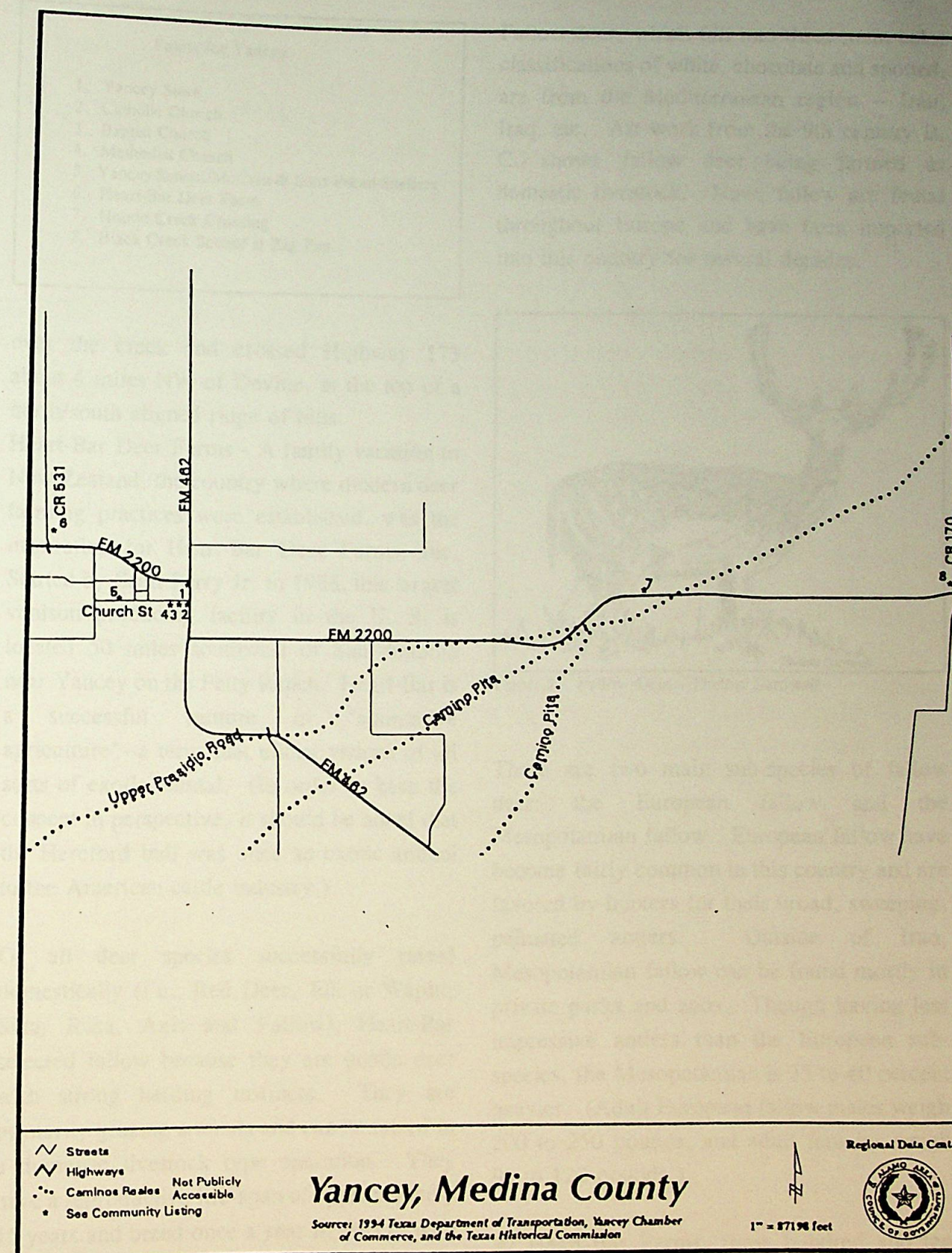
the Buck Hill School. The two-story brick high school served until recent years when the district dissolved; the students now go to whichever is nearest to home: Hondo, D'Hanis, Devine or Pearsall. The community had always had strong religious values, and today the Baptists, Catholics, Methodists and Seventh Day Adventists all have active congregations.



Yancey has had a number of interesting "firsts" in the course of its history: Mrs. Virginia Bailey, working at the way station at Tehuacana, was the first post mistress in the southern U.S.; H.P. Nixon had one of the first cars in the county, and his daughter Hallie Nixon McAnelly was the first girl in the county to drive a car; the first county school hot lunch program (1918); the first small community dial telephone system (1950); and the first - and only - midnight funeral in 1917. (Local information number: Yancey Store - 210- 426-8654.)

More information

The Upper Presidio Road crossed Hondo Creek in the area of the F.M. 2200 bridge



Points for Yancey

1. Yancey Store
2. Catholic Church
3. Baptist Church
4. Methodist Church
5. Yancey School/McCrea & Sons Pecan Shellers
6. Heart-Bar Deer Farm
7. Hondo Creek Crossing
8. Black Creek School at Zig Zag

over the creek and crossed Highway 173 about 4 miles NW of Devine, at the top of a north/south aligned ridge of hills.

Heart-Bar Deer Farms - A family vacation to New Zealand, the country where modern deer farming practices were established, was the inspiration for Heart-Bar Deer Farms, Inc. Started by Scott Perry Jr. in 1988, this largest venison producing facility in the U. S. is located 50 miles southwest of San Antonio near Yancey on the Petty Ranch. Heart-Bar is a successful venture in "alternative agriculture"--a term that elicits visions of all sorts of exotic animal. (In order to keep the concept in perspective, it should be noted that the Hereford bull was once an exotic animal to the American cattle industry.)

Of all deer species successfully raised domestically (i.e., Red Deer, Elk or Wapiti, Sika, Rusa, Axis and Fallow), Heart-Bar selected fallow because they are gentle deer with strong herding instincts. They are primarily grazing animals and can be raised in a domestic livestock type operation. They have a reproductive life-span of approximately 15 years and breed once a year in the fall with fawns births occurring in early summer.

Fallow deer, which fall into three main color classifications of white, chocolate and spotted, are from the Mediterranean region -- Iran, Iraq, etc. Art work from the 9th century B. C. shows fallow deer being farmed as domestic livestock. Now, fallow are found throughout Europe and have been imported into this country for several decades.

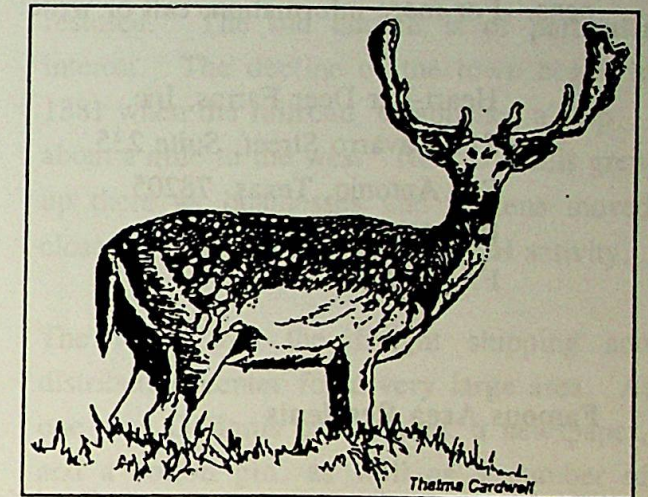


Figure 23 Fallow Deer - Thelma Cardwell

There are two main sub-species of fallow deer: the European fallow and the Mesopotamian fallow. European fallow have become fairly common in this country and are favored by hunters for their broad, sweeping, palmated antlers. Outside of Iran, Mesopotamian fallow can be found mostly in private parks and zoos. Though having less impressive antlers than the European sub-species, the Mesopotamian is 35 to 40 percent heavier. (Adult European fallow males weigh 200 to 250 pounds, and adult females weigh 90 to 120 pounds.)

At Heart-Bar Farms, three hundred and ten acres of irrigated pasturage is cropped twice

each year, and the deer graze year round. The entire farm is surrounded by an eight-foot deer proof fence made of wire mesh. Over three thousand deer are grazing at the farm, and this magnificent herd offers wonderful photo opportunities from CR 531. Or, with prior tour arrangements with Heart-Bar staff--visitors can view the working of the deer from a special catwalk built above the working pens. For more information, call or write:

Heart-Bar Deer Farms, Inc.
711 Navarro Street, Suite 235
San Antonio, Texas 78205
PHONE: 210-225-6571
FAX: 210-225-1763

Famous Area Residents

The Moore family settled on Hondo Creek in 1852 where young Lon Moore went on his first Indian scout at age twelve. In his active life Lon Moore participated in some 50 Indian scouts and six or seven battles, one being on Chacon Creek southeast of today's Devine. A county historical marker is at the site of Moore's grave at the old Ingleside Cemetery in Hondo. The old Lon Moore Crossing is on the Hondo in the area of the Hondo Creek Bridge near Biry (Source: Henry Briscoe)

Pleasant McAnelly, an early homesteader near Yancey, was standing next to Ben Milam when he was killed in San Antonio, in 1835. The old McAnelly home, built by the family in the 1880's is located near Yancey. (Source: Henry Briscoe)

Zig Zag

Named for two 90-degree turns in the road at an old crossroads, this small rural early community was the site of the Black Creek School. When schools were consolidated in the mid 1950s, the school was closed. One area resident remembers falling out of a car on both the "zig" and the "zag." (During the latter episode she said her ballooning 12-gore skirt made her look like she had on a parachute!) Deemed unsafe by the Highway Department, the "zigzag" was straightened, and only the school remains today as a reminder of the community with the colorful name.

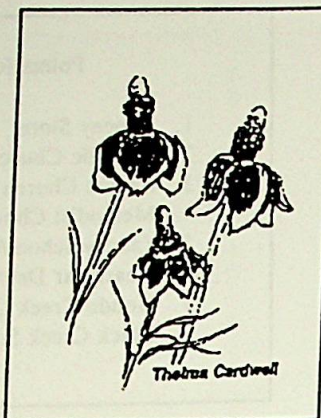


Figure 24 Mexican Hat - Thelma Cardwell

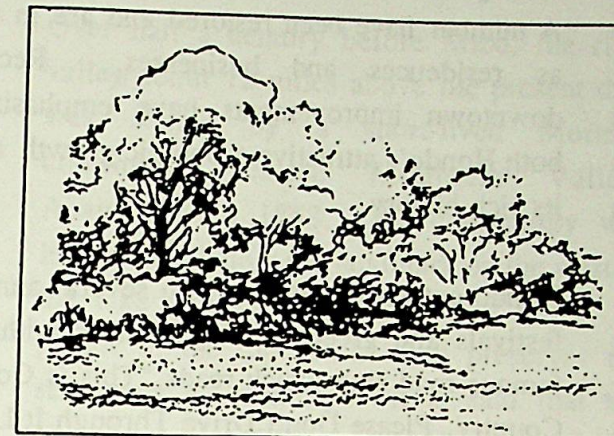


Figure 25 Oaks - Thelma Cardwell

D'Hanis

D'Hanis is actually two towns, Old and New D'Hanis. Old D'Hanis, one of the original Castro settlements, was surveyed in the winter of 1846-47 by Theodore Gentilz, who later became of Texas' most famous artists. By the following spring the settlement numbered 29 families.

The first houses and church were built of mesquite pickets, with thatch roofs and dirt floors; the typical Alsatian masonry building came much later. Indian trouble persisted for 30 years, but it was relieved--if not eliminated--by Texas Rangers and by the establishment of Fort Lincoln in 1849. The fort, located on the Old Woll Road, provided much needed protection, employment and occasionally food to the settlers. It was closed in 1851, but by then the town was on its feet

Other Historic Communities in Medina County:

and had become a busy stage stop for the '49ers and others traveling west.

Today Old D'Hanis is a place of ruins and open spaces, with a few more modern homes and a few of the old homes that have been restored. The old church is of particular interest. The decline of the town began in 1881 when the railroad established a stop about a mile to the west. New D'Hanis grew up there as businesses and citizens moved closer to that center of commercial activity.

The town was the freight shipping and distribution center for a very large area. At one time D'Hanis had a hotel, a newspaper, and a cotton gin, as well as a number of mercantile establishments. Today's businesses reflect today's needs; the bank has been in business since 1916, but the livery stable has been replaced by a gas station and the blacksmith by a garage. D'Hanis still fills the everyday needs of a large farming and ranching area. One of the most striking community features is the large number of brick buildings. (Television film crews have used this picturesque community to good advantage for historical mini-series.) Excellent clay--sometimes with prehistoric sharks' teeth--is found in the area, and brick and tile making has been a major part of the local economy since the 1880's. D'Hanis bricks are still made in the traditional manner and are widely used throughout the region. (Sources: *Market Trail Cookbook* and *Market Trail News*)

Hondo

Spanish explorer Alonso De Leon gave Hondo Creek its name, indicating the deep valley with its running stream, later to become the site of the city of Hondo. Later, in the 1840s, hardy immigrants with Castro colonies settled on Hondo Creek to farm and ranch. Then, in 1848, Medina County was formed with Castroville as the county seat.

When the railroad pushed west, a watering station for the trains was established near Hondo Creek. The resulting community was called Hondo City. The railroad set aside land for a park, churches and a college and offered incentives to those who came to the new town and bought property. Hondo City prospered, with the railroad taking livestock and produce to market, and in 1892 Hondo became the county seat of Medina County, by election. The Commissioners Court ordered a new courthouse to be built. It was completed in 1893 with classical revival style of yellowish limestone from a site about seven miles north of town. Two-story wings were added in the 1940s, from the same limestone.

In the 1980s the courthouse interior was renovated and updated and marked with a Texas Historical Marker.

Also wearing a Texas Historical Marker is the Medina County Museum in Hondo. Housed in the 1893 vintage Southern Pacific Depot, the museum has original railroad artifacts, a Southern Pacific caboose, the stem engine that powered the D'Hanis Brick and Tile Factory for many years, a one-room schoolhouse and other historic items of interest.

Additionally, many of the residences and business buildings in Hondo are historic, having been built in the early days of Hondo. A number have been restored and are in use as residences and businesses. Recent downtown improvements have emphasized both Hondo's attractive economic growth and its rich history.

Hondo entertains visitors with several annual festivals and greets passing visitors with its famous road sign which reads, "This is God's Country. Please Don't Drive Through It Like Hell!"

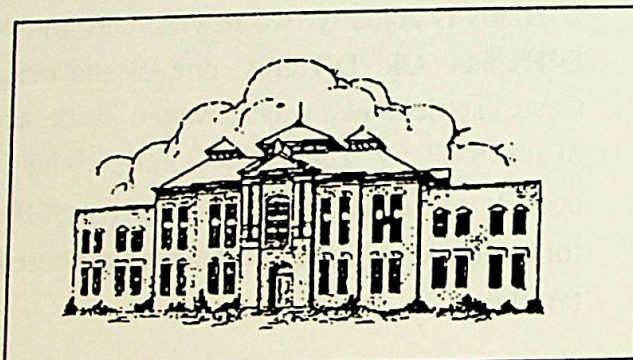


Figure 26 Medina County Courthouse

Mico

The name of Mico at Medina Lake is short for Medina Irrigation Company, which built the dam and developed the irrigated farm lands situated between Macdonna and Devine. It started as a Post Office and restaurant for the workmen who built the dam; after 1912 it became a Mecca for fishermen, hunters,

boaters and retirees. It still occupies that niche today.

Over half a century before Mico, the river valley about 12 miles above the present dam was settled by a short-lived Mormon community called Mountain Valley. Abandoned in 1858, the community was located just below the landmark on the west of the lake still known as Mormon Bluff. A plaque at the top of the dam preserves the settlement's memory. It is said that the chimneys can still be seen when the lake is low.

Medina Lake is Mico's chief landmark and reason for existence. The project was a masterpiece of organization by any standard; from the day Dr. Fred Pearson accepted responsibility for securing financing until the start of pouring concrete was almost exactly a year. The dam was completed in about another 54 weeks. It consumed 300,000 barrels of cement, which went into 292,000 cubic yards of a 1-3-6 concrete mix that was poured around the clock, 6 days a week; that volume is within 10% of the famous Roosevelt Dam. At the time the Medina Dam was completed, it was the fourth largest dam in the country. It is 1,580 feet long at the crest, rises 164 feet above the river bed, is 128 feet wide at the base and 25 feet at the crest. The lake holds 254,000 acre feet of water at spillway level, half of which is in the top 16 feet. Maximum depth at the dam is 152 feet. (In spite of rumors, there are positively no workmen entombed in all that concrete.)

The big problem with Medina Lake in the early days, from a recreational standpoint, was its almost total inaccessibility. The road from Castroville was rough and muddy and crossed the river twice on doubtful bridges. The road from Pipe Creek was long, rough, steep, rocky and clogged with ranch gates. A fishing trip required two days at a minimum. Finally, in about 1920, a group of San Antonio investors built a toll road from Culebra Road at the county line to the lake. This served until better state and county roads could be built. Today's FM 1283 roughly parallels the toll road, and some of the old bridges can still be seen.

(Sources : *Market Trail Cookbook* and *Market Trail News*)



Figure 27 Churches of Medina County - N.R. Kelly

New Fountain

A couple of miles from Quihi toward Hondo is the community of New Fountain. It was never laid out as a town, and today it consists of the New Fountain Methodist Church (1858), the old store and stage stop, and several well kept old stone homes. In years past it also had a Post Office and the first cotton gin in Medina County. The gin is reported to have had the first electricity in the county and one of the first telephones. They also say that while it was being built it was attacked by Indians; the racket made when their arrows bounced off of the tin roof apparently frightened them away. (Sources: *Market Trail Cookbook* and *Market Trail News*)

Quihi

"How's that?" is the reaction of most people on seeing or hearing the word "Quihi" (kweehee) for the first time. It is apparently a double corruption of the Indian name for the Mexican eagles that once were numerous around the little lake: "Keechee." The Spaniards were the first Europeans to come through the area, and they spelled the name Quichi - with the same pronunciation. Germans from Castro's colony were the first permanent settlers; they dropped the c, and the pronunciation evolved to its present form. Castro made his first survey of the area barely a month after the founding of Castroville in September 1844, and laid out the townsite. The first settlers did not arrive until the following March, when ten families moved out from Castroville. Two of these families were wiped out by Indians before the end of the month, but the survivors hung on and eventually prospered. The Indian raids continued until 1874. A severe drought in 1848-1849 was followed by an outbreak of cholera. The combination almost caused the abandonment of the settlement. During the Civil War, three men from the community died in the Confederate Army. Many others--along with men from other Texas German settlements who opposed secession--went to Mexico. They became known as *busch waechter* or bush sentinels; the term was Anglicized to bush-whacker. After the war the community grew and prospered, and even had hopes of becoming the County Seat. The stone structure that was built to be the courthouse is still visible. (Sources: *Market Trail Cookbook* and *Market Trail News*)

Rio Medina / Haby Settlement

These two communities are very close, with Rio Medina on the east side of the Medina and Haby Settlement on the west. Haby Settlement is the older, going back to the earliest days of the Castro Colony. The Haby family was granted a large tract in the area, to which much was added by purchase over the years.

Members built eleven stone houses along about 2 1/2 miles of the Haby Settlement Road, all of which are still standing and most still owned by Haby descendants. The homes were built close together as a protection from Indians, who were a constant threat. You can still see the tree where Nicolaus Haby hid one moonlit night.

One of the most valuable features of the settlement was a free-flowing spring; it enabled each of the eight children of one family to have a one-acre irrigated garden. You can still make out the boundaries of these

square tracts just south of the new Farm-to-Market road. The spring is one of the very few natural water sources in South Texas that didn't dry up during the drought in the 1950's.

For about 40 years, beginning in the 1850's, the Settlement supported a church, a school, a store and two butcher shops. The smaller



families of the later generations of Habys led to the closing of all of these by about 1900. The only business now in Haby Settlement is a Bed and Breakfast operated by Mr. and Mrs. Jaks of Rio Medina.

At about the same time that Haby Settlement folded, the first saloon (later expanded to include a store) was opened in Rio Medina. That location had better access to Castroville and was better able to serve the many families who had settled east of the river. That building is now an annex of the present Rio Medina Store, which was built in 1928.

As with so many communities, the store was also the Post Office. Mr. Alfred Rihn operated both from 1914 until the late 1940's; his daughter succeeded him in the Post Office and is still serving today.

At various times Rio Medina has had a school, several saloons, a dance hall, a meat market, a cotton gin and a couple of garages; one of the garages has more recently served as a saloon and is now a popular Mexican restaurant.

Another Historic Road Cutting Through Medina County Communities...

One of the more prominent, yet least known of the old roads through this area was the Chihuahua Road. This road was established to provide a more direct route from silver rich Chihuahua, Mexico (south of El Paso) to a seaport. The old road originated on the Texas Coast, at Indianola. Proceeding to the

northwest, the road passed through Victoria, then over to Goliad, to a point near Floresville and thence to San Antonio. From San Antonio it passed through Castroville, D'Hanis and Fort Inge then on to Fort Clark (Bracketville). From 1850 to 1877, more commerce and traffic passed over this important route than the much better known Santa Fe Trail, which also terminated at Chihuahua. (Source: Henry Briscoe)

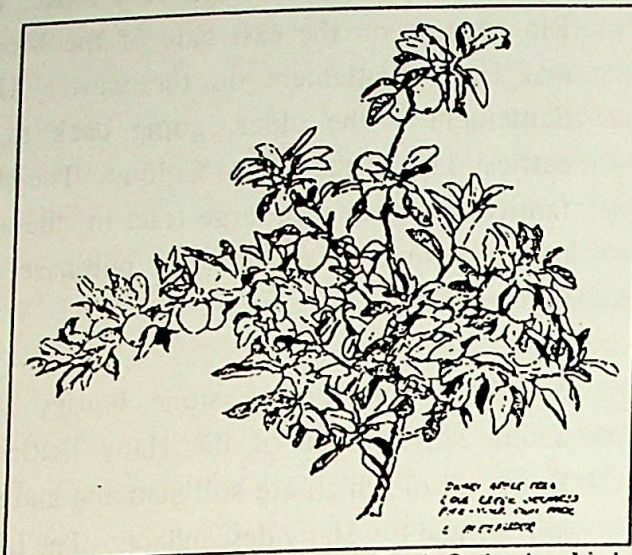
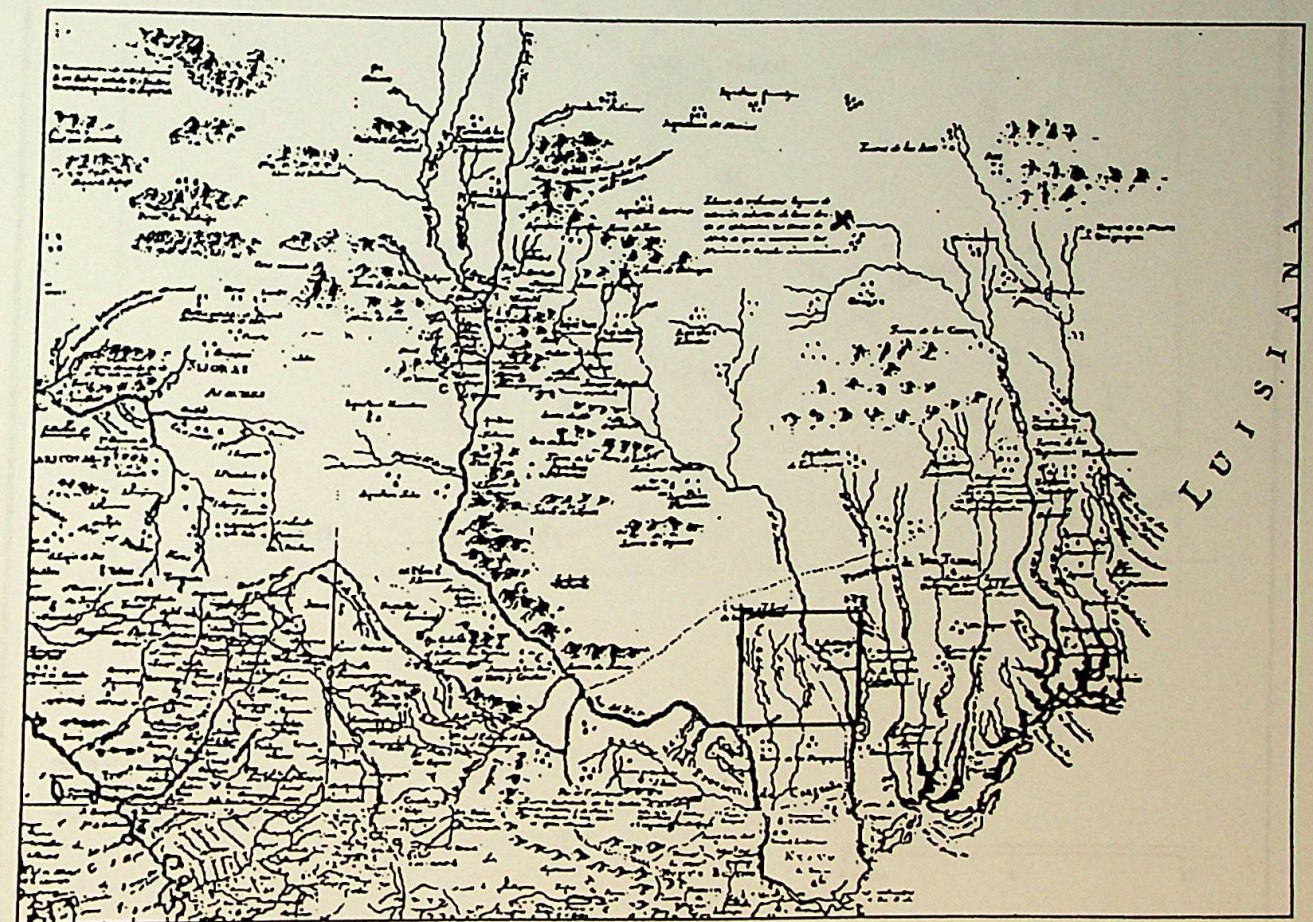


Figure 28 Dwarf Apple at Love Creek Orchard - Linda Alexander

Camino Reales

Frio County



Frio County: An Historical Overview

Lying in one of the first areas in Texas to be explored by Spanish in 1690. Frio County was created in 1858 and organized in 1871. (Source: 1936 State Historical Marker.)

Located in South Texas and traversed by the Frio River, from which it derives its name, Frio County was created on February 1, 1858 from parts of Atascosa, Bexar and Uvalde Counties. The county was organized in 1871 with a population of over 300. (Today that population has reached to over 12, 000.) Frio City in the western part of the county on the banks of the Frio River was the first county seat.

Prior to the 1860s, the area now known as Frio County was virtually obscured from the rest of Texas. Except for the occasional crossing of the area by early French and Spanish expeditions, the land was left to the nomadic Coahuitecan Indians, who were for the most part, taken in by the missions in San Antonio. The area was left with Spanish names such as Frio River, San Miguel Creek, Hondo Creek and Presidio Crossing. The northwestern corner of the county is crossed by the Camino Real/Old San Antonio Road. This route was followed by the Spanish in their travels to the settled areas of Texas. Santa Anna's army crossed Presidio Crossing on the Frio River in 1836, on his way to the Alamo.

In 1880 the International-Great Northern Railroad extended its line from San Antonio to Laredo, passing through Frio County but

missing Frio City by about 15 miles. The new town of Pearsall sprang up along the railroad and became the county seat in 1883. Frio City, later called Frio Town, with a population of nearly 1, 000, was nearly deserted.

In the past one hundred years, there have been many communities, which had hopes of becoming towns, that sprang up all over the county. Today there are only four towns that survive: Dilley, Moore, Pearsall and Bigfoot (see community write-ups).

Frio County has red loam and sandy soils. There are deposits of clay silica, sand, gravel and Carrizo Water. The altitude of the area is 400-800 feet with an average annual rainfall of 23 inches. An average annual temperature of 70 degrees makes possible a 281 day growing season. Frio County started as a land of ranches and cattle and is still important to the economy. But, in the 1920's, the development of irrigated farming brought new impetus to the agricultural business. Today, farming is a multi-million dollar business with the production of peanuts, cotton, grains, grain sorghums, melons and vegetables. The production of honey is also important. The county has long produced some oil and gas and the mid 1970's saw a new boom and growth in that field.

More information

Historical Markers in Frio County - During the Texas Centennial in 1936, Texas erected six markers in Frio County. All had the Star of Texas in a wreath of leaves. Four of the marker subjects were Frio Town (the first

county seat), Pilot Knob (well-known landmark - the highest point in the County - said to have been "...a guiding point during days of outlaws."), Frio County and Big Foot (see community write-up). The 1936 State Marker to commemorate an Indian Battle south of the Frio River on Hwy 81 South was displaced during construction of Interstate 35 and has not yet been reinstalled; the subject and location of the sixth marker is currently unknown.

The first marker was placed at the Courthouse in 1968. Home of Pachal Indians before Spaniards arrived in Mexico (1519). First area explorer was Alonso De Leon, 1690, searching for Fort St. Louis by La Salle. Upper Presidio Road - artery of travel from Saltillo, Mexico, to East Texas - crossed Frio River and became a King's Highway, 1720. Frio Town, first county seat, was located on the road, over which Santa Anna marched to destroy defenders of the Alamo in 1836. County took name from Frio (a Spanish word which means "cold") River. The county seat moved to Pearsall, 1883. The Jail, which was built 1884 and is the oldest building in Pearsall, received an official Historical Medallion in 1970. The Brummett Cemetery near Big Foot was marked in 1974. (Source: *Frio County Centennial 1871 - 1971*)

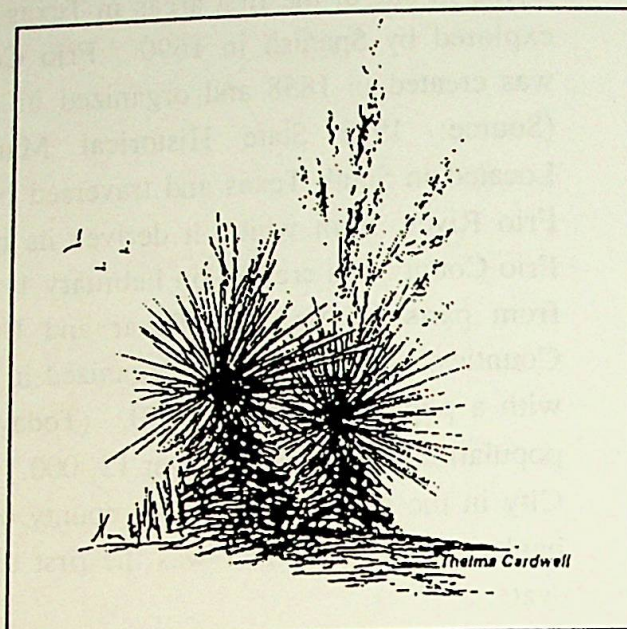


Figure 29 Spanish Dagger - Thelma Cardwell

Camino Real Communities of Frio County

Dilley - "A Slice of the Good Life"

The City of Dilley is a small town with old-fashion values and friendly people. Situated over the plentiful and clear Carrizo Springs Aquifer, the city and surrounding area are part of both the Wintergarden Area and the Brush Country. Dilley is located along IH 35 halfway between San Antonio and Laredo, making it easy to enjoy country living, but also convenient to the larger cities and Mexico.

For recreation, there are two public parks, two softball/hardball fields, and a Little League field. The public swimming pool is located next to a scenic miniature golf course. Some of the best hunting land in Texas is located around Dilley.

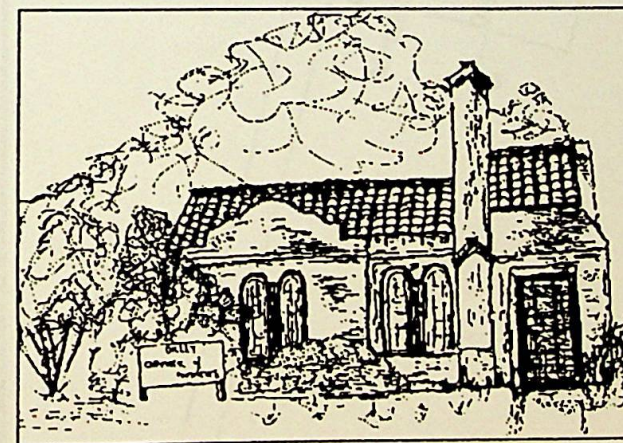


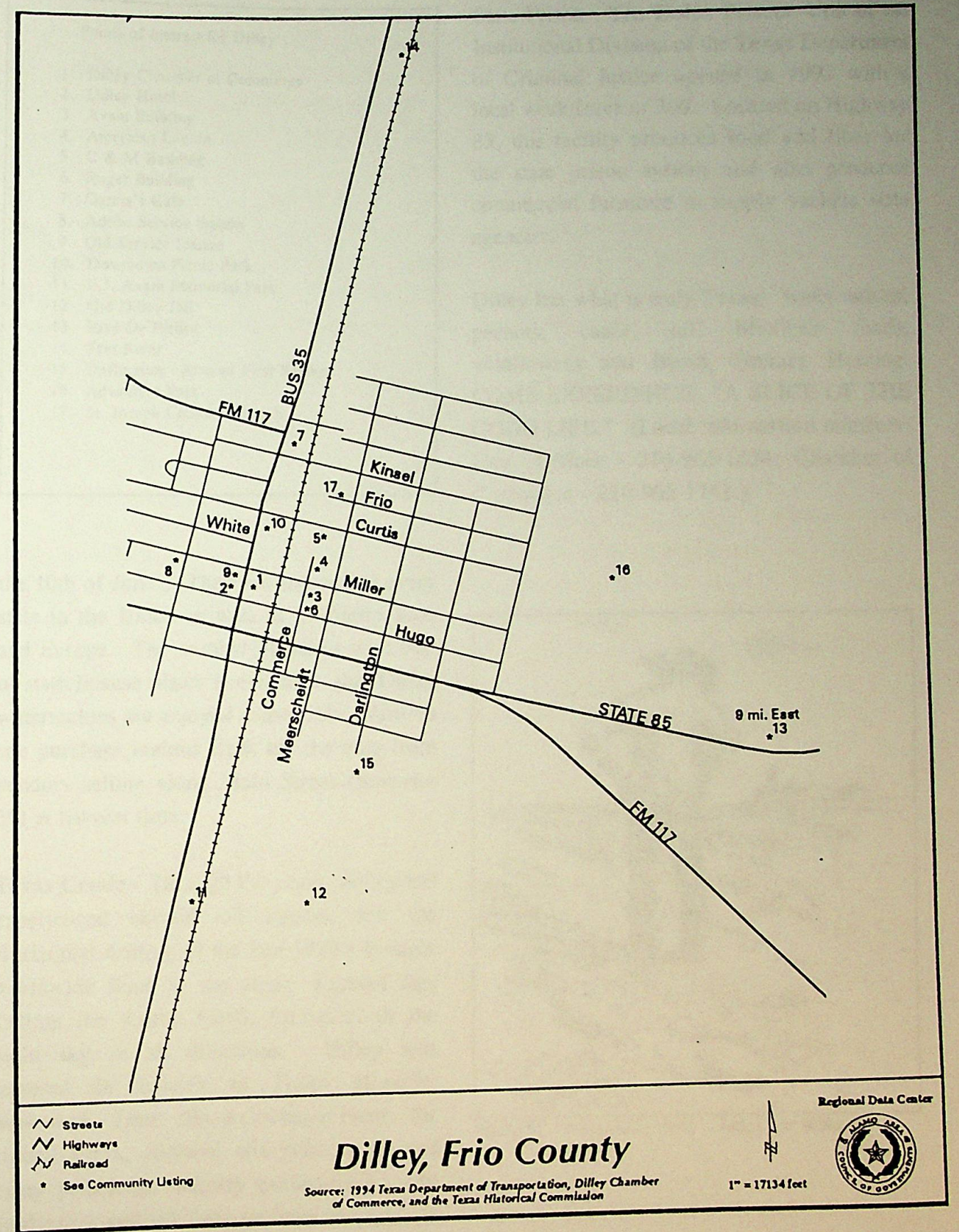
Figure 30 Dilley Chamber of Commerce - Soveida Obregon

Historic Dilley - Lying along the 300 year old Camino Real corridor with remnants of that Spanish Colonial trail cutting through the

brush country not far from the town limits, the area of southern Frio County, now known as Dilley, was settled in 1865 and named Darlington for a local landowner. In 1880 the town of Dilley was laid out and named for an official of the International and Great Northern Railroad. A method of marketing local products was then provided by the railroad.

A number of historic buildings in the downtown area date back to the "Roaring 20's." The Chamber of Commerce Building was built in 1927 by the Dilley Women's Club. The Dilley Hotel was built in 1924 primarily to serve the train passengers. The railroad telegrapher notified the hotel of the number of guests arriving at noon. Passengers disembarked, walked across a plank walkway to the hotel and enjoyed a hot and hearty meal. These buildings are still used for the Chamber office and a hotel. The Avant Building, built in 1929, was the bank and is now the City Municipal Building. Ranchlands stretched in all directions from the city in the 1880's as well as the present time, giving a Western atmosphere that typifies Texas for most people. The original old Dilley jail built of 4 X 4 timbers was replaced in 1924 by a cubical latticed steel structure that is now located on the F. J. Avant Memorial Park grounds for preservation.

Watermelons - Dilley is famous for its delicious watermelons. The town teems with activity when the melons are harvested about



Points of Interest for Dilley

1. Dilley Chamber of Commerce
2. Dilley Hotel
3. Avant Building
4. American Legion
5. C & M Building
6. Roger Building
7. Garcia's Cafe
8. Adobe Service Station
9. Old Service Station
10. Downtown Picnic Park
11. F.J. Avant Memorial Park
12. Old Dilley Jail
13. Paso De Piedra
14. Frio River
15. Darlington - Area of First Settlers
16. Adventure Park
17. St. Joseph Catholic Church

State Prison - The Dolph Briscoe Unit of the Institutional Division of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice opened in 1992 with a local work force of 300. Located on Highway 85, this facility produces food and fiber for the state prison system and also produces commercial furniture to supply various state agencies.

Dilley has what is truly Texas: watermelons, peanuts, cattle, oil, Mexican foods, wildflowers and Brush Country Hunting. COME EXPERIENCE "A SLICE OF THE GOOD LIFE." (Local information numbers: City Offices - 210-965-1624; Chamber of Commerce - 210-965-1742.)

the 10th of June., They are shipped to every state in the Union as well as to Puerto Rico and Europe. The number of trucks with out-of-state license plates is evidence that Dilley watermelons are enjoyed nationwide. Visitors can purchase melons fresh off the vine from vendors selling along Main Street (Business 35) at harvest time.

Texas Crude - Through the years, Dilley has experienced several oil booms, but the Horizontal drilling of the late 1980's brought worldwide fame to the area. Lighted rigs drilling the Austin Chalk formation lit the night sky in all directions. Dilley was featured in articles in *Texas Monthly*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, the Associated Press, the United Press, national television news and many petroleum industry publications. Oil production and oil field services continue to contribute to the Dilley economy.

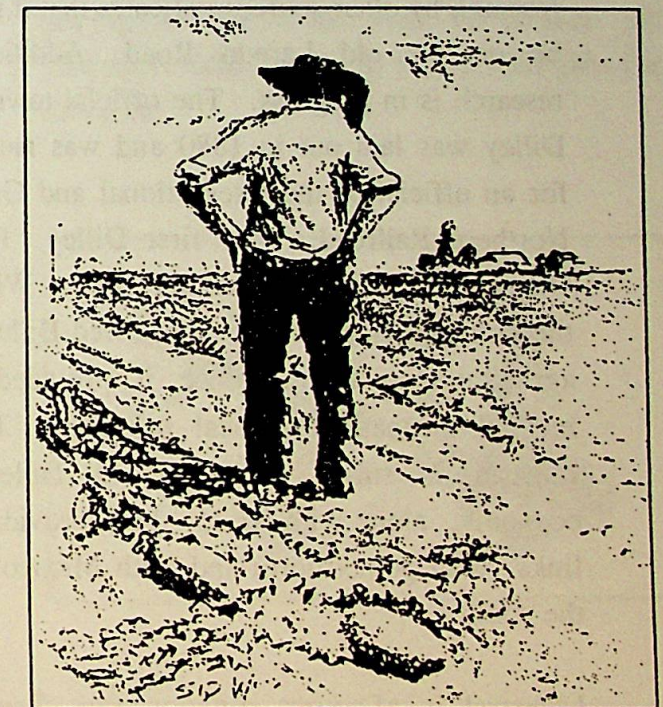


Figure 31 Watermelon Field - Judge Sid Williams

More information

Initially established as a mission in 1899, St. Joseph's Catholic Church's first structure was built in 1901, and the present church dates to 1956 with a major renovation in 1979. For over a quarter of a century St. Joseph's has hosted the popular, annual "Watermelon Festival" and "Little Miss Sandia Pageant" on the last Sunday in June on the church grounds. (For information - call 210-965-1926.)

The area of southern Frio County now known as Dilley was settled about 1865 and was known as Darlington for a local landowner. Local oral tradition suggests that a rock crossing on the Frio River in the area of Highway 85 bridge was associated with the Upper Presidio Road; however archival research by other sources indicates that it may be on the old Laredo Road. Additional research is in progress. The official town of Dilley was laid out in 1880 and was named for an official of the International and Great Northern Railroad. The first Dilley Post Office was established around 1885. When the railroad came through, it allowed Dilley's agriculture to thrive, since it provided a method of marketing local products. The railroad is still prominent in Dilley's economy, along with IH 35, both providing links with points north and with Mexico to the south.

Livestock is, of course, a major crop. Ranch lands stretch in all directions from the city, providing a panorama that typifies Texas to most people. Vegetable production is a major part of local agriculture also. In the

1920s Dilley was noted for onion production, the onion fields surrounding the growing town. Now potato production is important also, but the king of crops and official motif of Dilley is the watermelon.

Frio Town

Known 1871-1886 as Frio City First County seat of Frio County 1871-1883. Erected by State of Texas 1936. (Source: Historical marker on 140 - 3 miles east of 57)

More information

[Note: Sites of Frio Town and the Presidio Crossing are now on private land and not accessible to the public.]

Frio City, as it was originally titled, was created in 1871. On Aug. 8, 1871, A. L. Odin was appointed to lay off the town of Frio in Frio County. The sale of lots was advertised in the *San Antonio Express* to take place on October 3, 1871. The town was founded on the Frio just below the Presidio Crossing.

In 1836, Santa Ana and his troops entered Texas by way of the Presidio at San Juan Bautista. At the Presidio Crossing, Santa Ana and his vast army rested before his final march to the Alamo.

The first post office was established in the new town with name of Frio City. First mail was carried on horseback from Benton City [See listing of Historic Communities in Atascosa County..] Later a contract was awarded to carry it from San Antonio by stage coach.

On November 28, 1871, the county ordered W.C. Daugherty to receive bids on a twenty by forty foot "California House" with ten foot partitions. This was to be used for a courthouse. The lumber, cut from cypress trees that grew along the Frio River, was brought by ox wagon from Leakey, 85 miles away. The shingles were also made in Leakey. Most of the homes in Frio City were made of this cypress lumber. Several wagons with as many as six yokes of oxen would come in together. In January 1872, the courthouse was completed.

In 1877 the wooden courthouse was destroyed by fire and the next year a two-story building of native stone was built. A gracefully curved walnut stairway railing was greatly admired by all. The contractor's bid on this building was not sufficient to meet his obligation. One of his bondsmen assumed full charge and completed the building at his own expense.

The first jail was made of stone and erected in 1872. The second story was used as a jury room. Many notorious characters of early days were locked within these walls. Such lawless and famous characters as Sam Bass and Jesse and Frank James were kept for minor offenses. "Texas" John Slaughter, was a frequent visitor to this area before going to Arizona to join Wyatt Earp. Another interesting person locked in the Frio City Jail was the writer O. Henry. His drinking put him there.

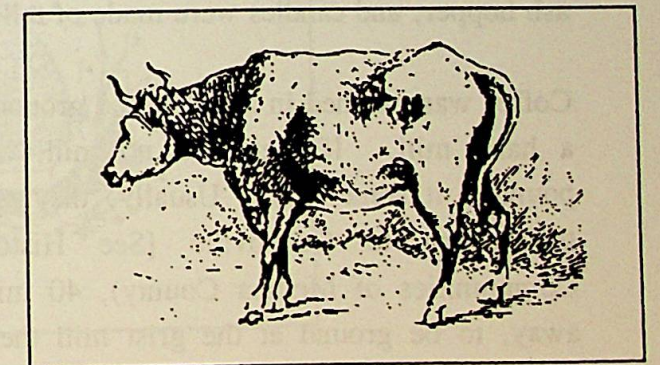
The construction of these two buildings was very expensive since most of the material had

to be hauled from Leakey. To eliminate these costs, the settlers established a shingle mill, brick factory and lime kiln and used the natural resources of the area.

In 1872, roads were marked out from Frio City to various points. The main street was titled Water Street.

The first school was taught in a private home, the pupils mostly beginners. Later a small house was built to be used as a school, Sunday School and community house. Still later a school house and Masonic Lodge was built to take care of the increasing population.

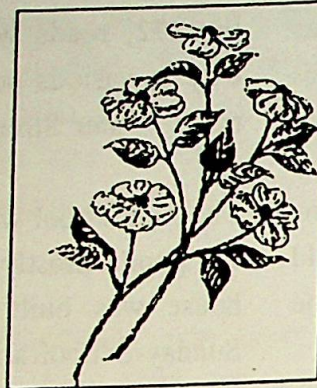
Religion was greatly regarded not only for its teachings, but also because it gave the people a chance to associate. The people would also get together out on the river for picnics. At Christmas time there was a tree with gifts for everyone.



Fencing was unheard of in and around Frio City. Free range was open to everyone. Around 1879, the ranchers began to fence their property. The "Free Grazers" were a product of this action. Organized to promote

free range, they destroyed many miles of fence. This continued until 1884, when the law making fence cutting a penitentiary offense was enacted.

In the early days there was not much farming. Some corn was planted. Prairie hay was cut and brought to town in wagons. The land was mostly all prairie then, with



few trees, except along the creeks. There were no windmills. During a drought the stock was watered from wells dug by hand then drawn by hand or with a horse.

Most of the early settlers built their houses of logs or pickets of elm or hackberry. Chimneys were mud and sticks. Meals were cooked in skillets at the fireplace. Women made their soap with lye dripped from an ash hopper, and candles were made of tallow.

Coffee was parched in a skillet and ground in a hand mill. If they had no mill, they pounded it some way. Usually, they took their corn to Castroville [See Historic Communities of Medina County], 40 miles away, to be ground at the grist mill there, traveling by wagon.

During the trail drives, vast herds of cattle were sent out of Frio County. Many of the brands used today are ones established in those days. Trail or road brands were placed on all cattle sent up the trail.

After a drive, the people would have a stock meeting for the purpose of paying each other for the cattle that had been sold or driven to Kansas. At the meetings blankets were spread on the ground for "Monte." Gambling was the common pastime. Everyone came to the stock meeting and had a good time.

In 1880, the International and Great Northern Railroad extended its main line through Frio County. The line missed Frio City by 16 miles. On July 4, 1881, the first passenger train pulled into the newly founded town of Pearsall. Lots for the new town were sold that day.

Pearsall was located on a sheep ranch at a place called "Wagoner's Well" because wagons stopped there for water. With the sale of lots for Pearsall, Frio City's life was doomed.

Again the sound of hammers were heard in Frio City, a thriving town of 1,500 people, but this time it was laying low the houses and moving them to Pearsall and thus ending Frio City.

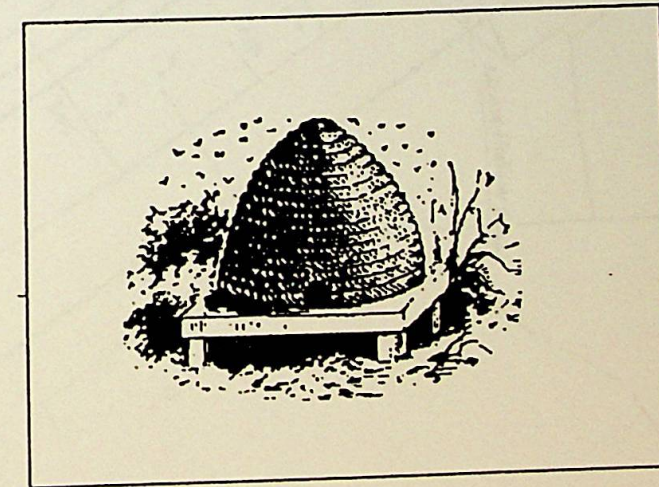
Frio City's name was changed in 1886 to Frio Town and soon thereafter Pearsall was named the county seat.

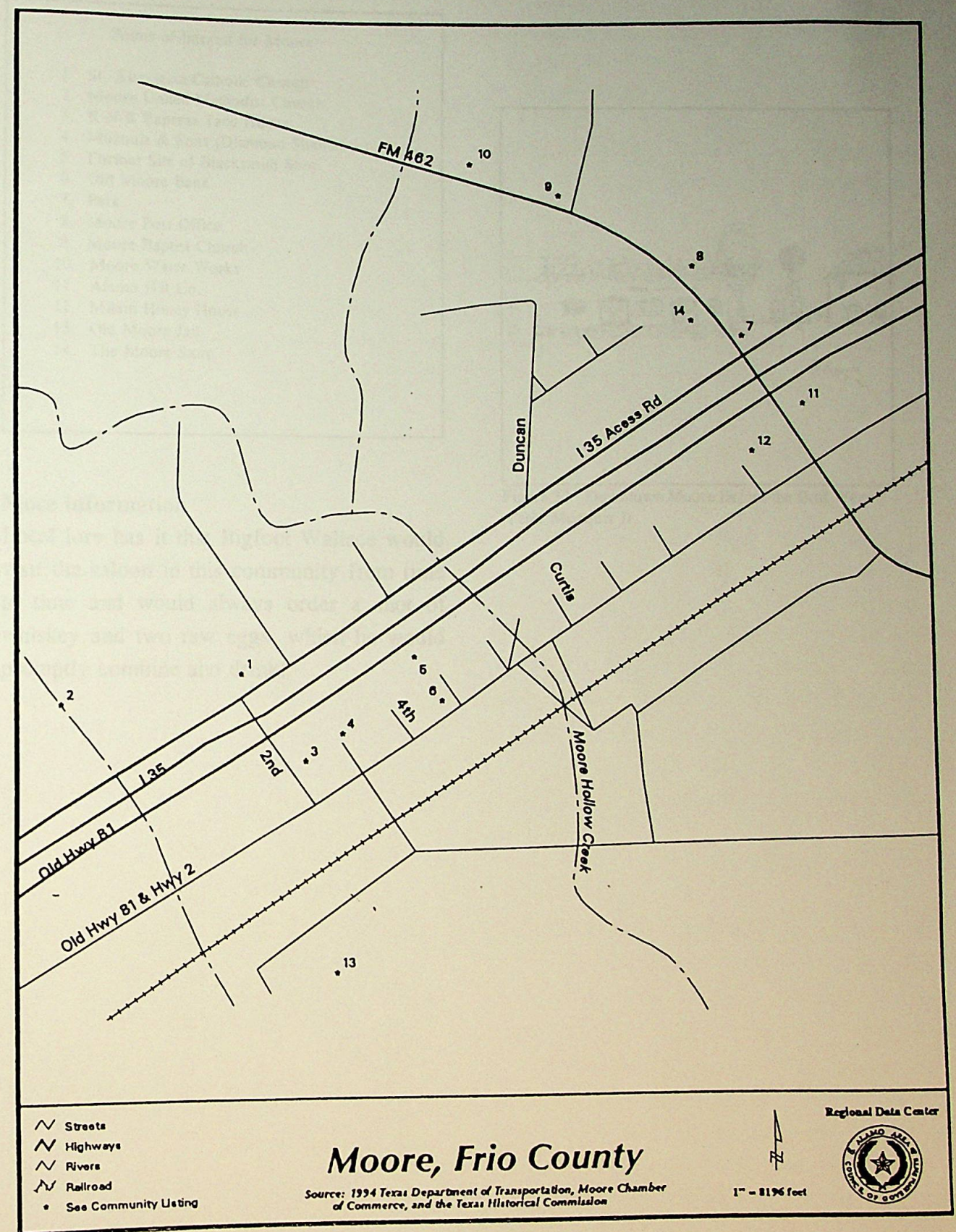
(Source: *History of Frio Town, Texas* - the Frio County Historical Commission)

Moore

Originally called Moore's Hollow, Moore in Frio County was named after an old bachelor, R. "Mustang" Moore, who was killed by Comanches in 1861. Moore was the largest town between San Antonio and Laredo up until 1919. In the summer of 1919, the Boll Weevil struck the local cotton crop and just about wiped out local speculators. The town was home to a bank, train depot, two hotels, several service stations, a dance (salon) hall, seven grocery stores, a lumber yard, and several restaurants. Moore's population has fluctuated over the years but there has remained a core of nearly five-hundred residents that are descendants of the first settlers of the area.

The main street for business has migrated westward over the years --first it was old Highway 2, which became Old 81, then changing from Old 81 when that road shifted to where the access road for Interstate 35 is today. Some of its old buildings still stand; the old school is now a community center. Because of the numerous *guajilla* bushes in the area, bee-keeping has been an important local industry since before the turn of the century. Bees from this community are transported westward every January to pollinate California almond orchards. In 1995 the bees of Moore produced over 600,000 pounds of honey! (Local information: Diamond Shamrock 210-665-2010 - Ask for Peter Muzquiz Jr.)





Points of Interest for Moore

1. St. Augustine Catholic Church
2. Moore United Methodist Church
3. R-N-R Express Taco House
4. Muzquiz & Sons (Diamond Shamrock)
5. Former Site of Blacksmith Shop
6. Old Moore Bank
7. Park
8. Moore Post Office
9. Moore Baptist Church
10. Moore Water Works
11. Alamo Hat Co.
12. Milam Honey House
13. Old Moore Jail
14. The Moore Store

More information

Local lore has it that Bigfoot Wallace would visit the saloon in this community from time to time and would always order a shot of whiskey and two raw eggs, which he would promptly combine and drink!

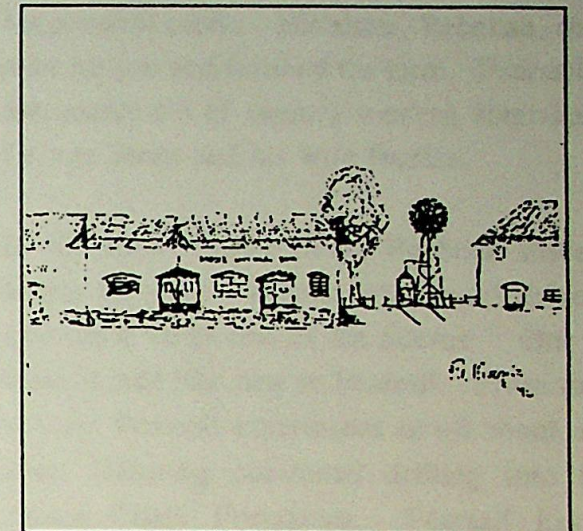


Figure 32 Downtown Moore Before the Boll Weevil - Peter Muzquiz Jr.

Pearsall

Pearsall was founded in 1881 by the I & GN railroad and was named for one of their Vice-Presidents, Thomas W. Pearsall. The area was treeless plain around Waggoner's Well, a sheep ranch; the well is located near the Old Catholic Church. The new town was crossed by a road from Pleasanton to Frio City, the county seat. The county seat was moved to Pearsall in 1883. Almost overnight the residents of Frio City tore down their houses and moved them by long wagons to "New Frio Town" as they called it. The Methodist Church from Frio City has been moved and is located behind the Old Frio County Jail. Soon Pearsall became known as "the Windmill City". A new jail was built in 1884 at a cost of \$12,000 and was in use until 1967. It is now the Frio Pioneer Jail Museum.

The pear burner, a great boon to cattlemen, was invented here. It removes thorns from prickly pear so livestock can eat it. Millions of cattle have survived the bad times through its use.

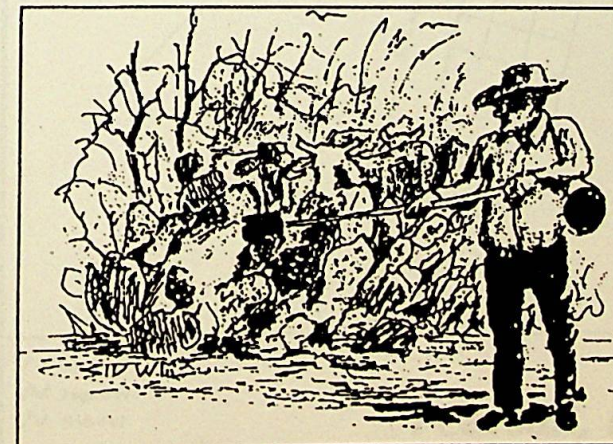


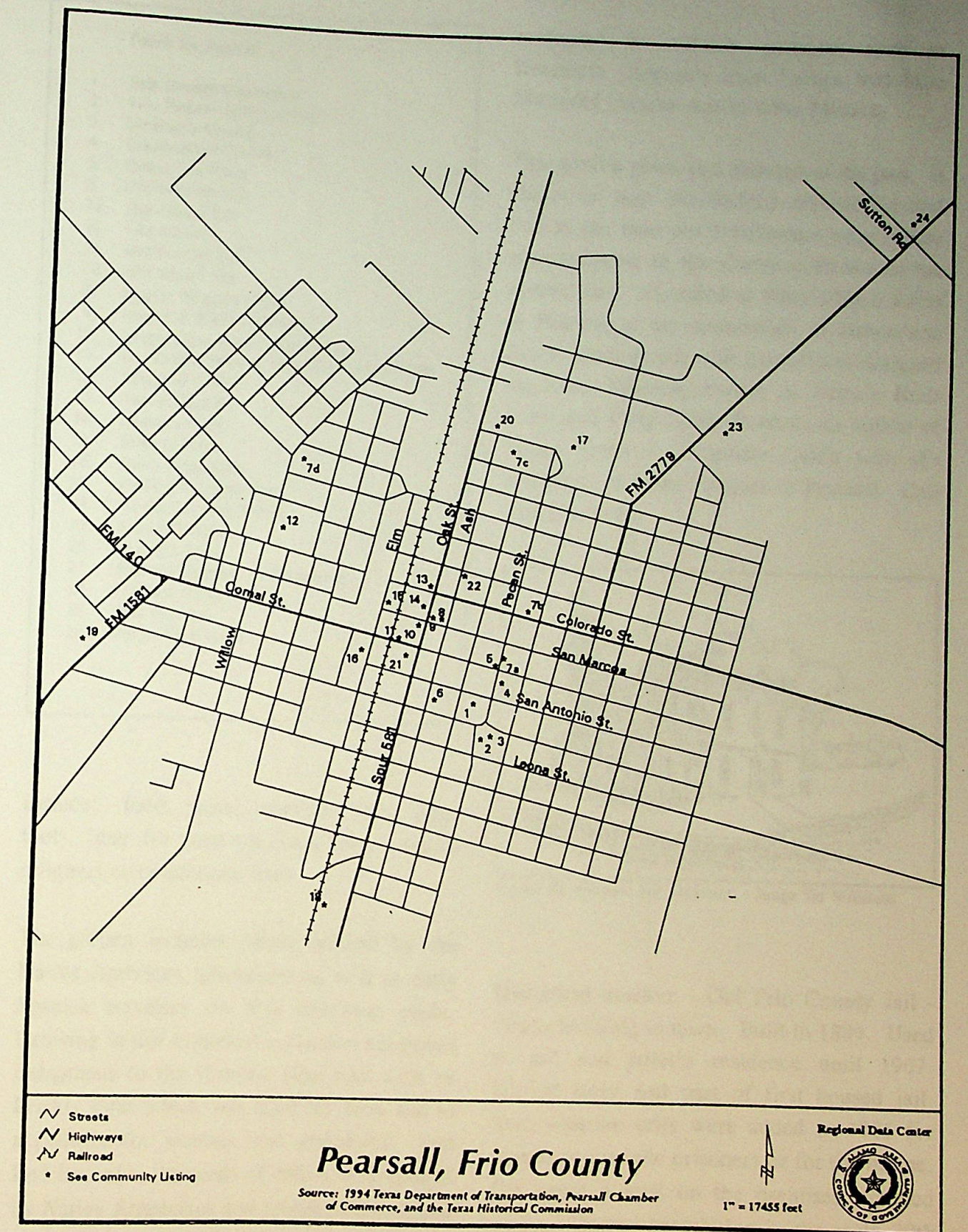
Figure 33 Burning Pear - Judge Sid Williams

Lyndon B. Johnson had been teaching school here in Pearsall only a few weeks when he was called to Houston to begin preparation for his political career. His sister, Rebekah, took over his job and finished the term. Pearsall is the hometown of country-western entertainer George Strait and his wife Norma.

In the early 1900's Sears Roebuck offered homes by mail; anyone who could drive a nail could build one of the houses. One of these is still like new in Pearsall. From time to time, Pearsall experiences an oil boom, the latest featuring horizontal drilling into the Austin Chalk Formation. Pearsall has a hospital, library, churches for most denominations, swimming pool, tennis and basketball courts, hiking trail and museum. There are ranches, farms, vegetable gardens, an herb farm (featuring a special Camino Real Garden and a butterfly garden), game hunting, bee apiaries, and recently, emu ranching. The biggest crop is peanuts. (Local information numbers: City Offices 210-334-2154 ; Chamber of Commerce 210-334-9424.)

More information

Camino Reales Garden - One of the best kept secrets in Pearsall is the newly installed El Camino Real Garden. This is an Ethnobotanical Garden, which is a collection of plants useful to people. This interesting garden is made up of selected trees, shrubs, wildflowers, and herbs important to the Camino Real (Royal Road), one of the state's oldest and most significant early historic trails. All the plants in this garden have some historical and/or present day uses which



Points for Pearsall

1. Frio County Courthouse
2. Frio Pioneer Jail Museum
3. Methodist Church
4. Presbyterian Church
5. Coker Tea Room
6. Christian Church
- 7a. Old School Site
- 7b. Old School
- 7c. Old Pearsall HS
- 7d. Old School Site
8. Piggley Wiggley Hotel
9. Beever & Hinder Building
10. People State Bank & Opera House
11. Dr. Bealls Office & Drug Store (City Hall)
12. Waggoners Well
13. Tondres Bakery
14. Jennings Store
15. Sanders Store
16. Smith Drug Store
17. Public Swimming Pool
18. Worlds Largest Peanut
19. Sports Complex
20. Exercise Track
21. Pearsall Chamber of Commerce
22. US Post Office
23. Frio Hospital
24. Pattys Herb Farm

include: food, spice, medicine, dye, soap, tools, fiber for weaving, horticulture and/or religious or ceremonial uses.

The garden includes plants utilized by the Native American inhabitants as well as early Spanish travelers on this historical route. Growing in this botanical collection are plants indigenous to the Camino Real trail such as Prickly Pear which was used for food and as a poultice for wounds and snakebites; and Red Buckeye, the seeds of which were ground by Native Americans and sprinkled into water to stun fish. Also displayed are some of the herbs the Spanish brought with them for

medicinal & culinary purposes such as Rosemary (Romero) from Europe and Mint Marigold (Yierba Anise) from Mexico.

This garden gives us a glimpse of the past. It shows us how wonderfully resourceful and tied to the land our forebearers were--while connecting us to the Caminos Reales in the present day. (Located at Patty's Herb Farm in Pearsall at the intersection of Sutton and Berry Ranch Roads, this garden was designed by Patty Johnson, owner of Patty's Herb Farm and Patty Leslie Pasztor, co author of Texas Trees - Friendly Guide with the assistance of Jorge Vasquez of Pearsall. Call 210-334-3944)

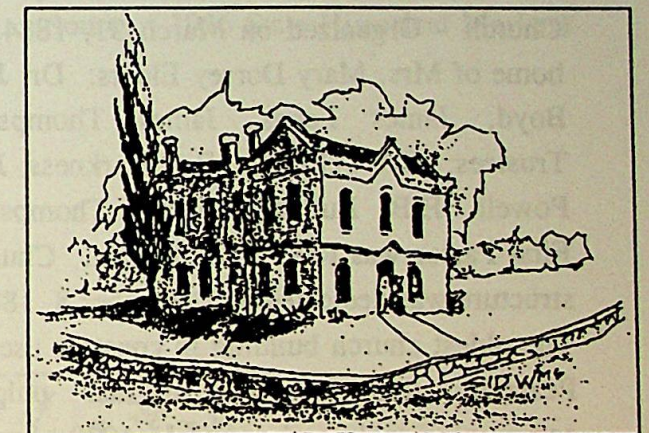


Figure 34 Pioneer Jail Museum - Judge Sid Williams

Historical marker - Old Frio County Jail - Oldest building in town. Built in 1884. Used as jail and jailer's residence until 1967. Second story and part of first housed jail. Two separate cells were added in 1885 for female or juvenile prisoners or for the insane. For years a well on the premises supplied water. During prohibition in the early 20th Century, confiscated bootleg liquor was stored

by law officers in one of the cells. (1970)
Official Historical Medallion

On July 3, 1976, U.S. Congressman Henry B. Gonzalez, made the dedication address and Mrs. Ollie Taylor, Frio County's only woman sheriff, cut the ribbon to formally open the Frio Pioneer Jail Museum. The First United Methodist Church donated the adjoining building, which had been relocated from Frio Town where it originally functioned as the church and school building when that community was the county seat in 1870s. (Source: *Frio County Centennial 1871 - 1991*)

Historical marker - Pearsall Presbyterian Church - Organized on March 31, 1884, in home of Mrs. Mary Dorsey Elders: Dr. J.R. Boyd, James Ferris, James Thompson. Trustees: C.W. Grubbe, R.J. Harkness, J.S. Powell, E.B. Rutledge, James Thompson. First Pastor was Rev. W.S. Wright. Church structure was dedicated on December 8, 1885. The oldest church building in constant use in Pearsall, this has its original pulpit, communion table and pews. In 1970 church became ecumenical. (1971)

Other Historic Community in Frio County

Big Foot

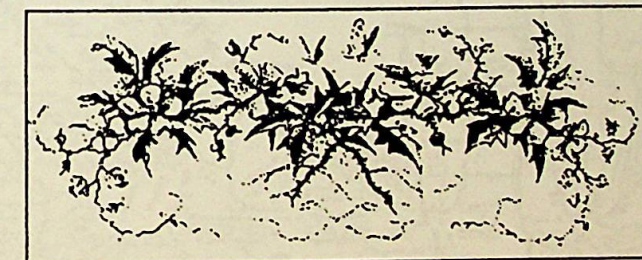
Big Foot was named for Big Foot Wallace, the community's most famous resident., who came to Texas shortly after the Texas Revolution to avenge the killing of his brother at San Jacinto. He was in Austin in its formative years and joined Somervell's ill-fated expedition to punish Mexico after Woll's raid in 1842 which resulted in the Mier affair where Wallace was captured and held captive for almost two years. Upon his return, he built a cabin on the Medina River, near Castroville. When the Alsations came in 1844, he relocated down on Chacon Creek, near today's Chacon Lake. In his later years, he lived near Bigfoot, the community named in his honor. Most of the many Indian fights and scouts in this area were led by Old Bigfoot. (Source: Henry Briscoe)

The Big Foot Museum offers a quaint and rustic array of artifacts and friendly docents happy to tell of the colorful local history. To see museum, please call ahead 210- 663-2419 or 210-665-5054.)

More information

"William Alexander A. Wallace, known as "Big Foot" Wallace, defender of Texas and Texans. As soldier, Ranger, mail rider, he protected the advancing frontier. Died January 7, 1899."

(Source: 1936 State Historical Marker)



Caminos Reales

Medina County

